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# Comparative vs. Conventional Advertising: a Study of the Differential Effects of Two Promotional Strategies on Attitude and Purchase.

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COMPARATIVE VS. CONVENTIONAL ADVERTISING: A  
STUDY OF THE DIFFERENTIAL EFFECTS OF TWO  
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COMPARATIVE VS. CONVENTIONAL ADVERTISING:  
A STUDY OF THE DIFFERENTIAL EFFECTS OF TWO  
PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ON ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
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requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Marketing

by  
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## ABSTRACT

Over the past four years there has been a number of empirical studies which have sought to determine the relative effectiveness of comparative advertising as opposed to conventional formats of marketing promotional strategy. So far these studies have focused on the communication effectiveness by measuring brand preference and intentions to buy through the attitude construct based on the Hierarchy-of-Effects model whose underlying premise is that awareness precedes attitude, and attitude precedes purchase. Based on this theoretical model, conclusions have been drawn that comparative advertising is not any more effective than its counterpart promotional strategy.

Still, there remains among students of marketing the belief that attitude is not reflective of behavior in the marketplace. Moreover, under conditions of low involvement purchase situations, other studies in marketing communications using Low-Involvement theory have found that the consumer tends to move from awareness directly to purchase of the advertised brand, and then to attitude about the product. Although previous studies on comparative advertising versus conventional advertising effects

have virtually all used conditions of low involvement purchase situations, instead of measuring purchase behavior, attitude was used as the criterion for measuring effectiveness.

In this light, it is suggested here that a stronger relationship between comparative advertising and purchase behavior may be found if a low involvement conceptual approach is used in measuring the effectiveness of this recent type of marketing communication. Thus, the purpose of this research is twofold: first, to introduce to marketing researchers a previously unexplored paradigm in conjunction with examining the impact of comparative advertising on consumptive behavior in the marketplace; and secondly, to utilize this paradigm in an attempt to identify significant relationships between attitude and behavior.

The paradigm introduced is based on the Hierarchy-of-Effects model, but shows a variation in behavior which is evident in the purchase of low-involvement items. This conceptualization is drawn from the works of Michael Ray: he proposed the low involvement hierarchy (Awareness → Purchase → Attitude) which is applicable to low involvement purchase situations whereby the attitude

construct is bypassed, as contrasted to Lavidge and Steiner's traditional model in which the consumer moves from one sequential stage to another without skipping any links.

Broadly stated, this study tested the general hypothesis that when a product is a low involving item, and has discriminating attributes which elicit novelty, curiosity, increased reward and so forth, in the consumer's perception, comparative advertising strategy has greater effect than conventional advertising on influencing purchase behavior before an attitude is formed or changed.

A time-series design was utilized to measure attitude and purchase at different points in time. A sample of 273 undergraduate marketing students was exposed to comparative and conventional advertisements. The attitude dimension of the study, analyzed by means of ANOVA, indicated that prepurchase attitude was statistically low in both comparative and conventional groups. However, in postpurchase attitude there was a significant difference between the comparative and conventional groups, the comparative group having higher mean scores. The findings thus indicate that in low-involving purchase situations prepurchase attitudes are low but that postpurchase

attitudes are high, especially in the case of comparative strategy.

As for the purchase dimension of the study, actual sales of the advertised brands were monitored. A Chi Square analysis of the data indicated that the comparative promotional strategy was not independent of the higher sales volume obtained through this strategy. Thus, it was concluded that comparative advertising strategy has greater differential effect than conventional advertising strategy on the subjects' purchase behavior.

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COMPARATIVE VS. CONVENTIONAL ADVERTISING:  
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PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ON ATTITUDE AND PURCHASE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Current marketing research interest in comparative advertising seems to be focused on the relative effectiveness of comparative advertising versus conventional advertising promotional strategies.<sup>1</sup> Comparative advertising which refers to a recent promotional practice, compares the sponsor's brand with one or more explicitly named brands of the same generic product or service category in terms of one or more specific characteristics, while conventional advertising presents the sponsor's brand without direct comparisons to other branded products or services of the same generic class.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Debra L. Scammon, "Comparison Advertising: Public Policy Questions," A paper presented at the Southwestern Marketing Association Conference, New Orleans, March 23-26, 1977, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>William L. Wilkie and Paul W. Farris, "Comparison Advertising: Problems and Potential," Journal of Marketing, Vol. 39, No. 4, October 1975, pp. 7-15.



Although the benefits and harms of comparative advertising have been widely debated,<sup>3</sup> little empirical evidence exists to either accept or reject its relative effectiveness.<sup>4</sup> Previous research endeavor has centered exclusively on evaluating the effects of this form of communication by means of attitude (consumer's brand preference and/or intentions to buy).<sup>5</sup> However, in view of the increasing use of comparative advertising with apparent success by companies in various industries, an important area of concern for the researcher open to study is comparative advertising's impact on purchase behavior rather than attitude and its implications for the marketing strategist.<sup>6</sup>

After reviewing the literature in Chapter I, an important research gap is presented in Chapter II; then

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<sup>3</sup>Stanley I. Tannenbaum and Andrew G. Kershaw, "For and Against Comparative Advertising," Advertising Age, July 5, 1976, pp. 25-29.

<sup>4</sup>Michael B. Mazis, "A Theoretical and Empirical Examination of Comparative Advertising," an unpublished research paper, Department of Marketing, University of Florida, 1977, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>P. M. Ginter and J. M. Starling, "Comparative Advertising: Environmental Regulatory and Effectiveness Issues," a paper presented at the Southwestern Marketing Association Conference, New Orleans, March 23-26, 1977, pp. 10-11.

<sup>6</sup>T. E. Barry and R. L. Tremblay, "Comparative Advertising: Perspectives and Issues," Journal of Advertising, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1975, p. 19.

in Chapter III the nature and scope of this study are discussed and several hypotheses are stated as an attempt to gather some empirical data on purchase behavior versus attitude to measure sales effectiveness in comparative versus conventional advertising. In Chapter IV the methodology for obtaining the required data is discussed; Chapter V presents the statistics obtained from the study and their analysis. Finally, Chapter VI includes a summary of the study, the conclusions/implications drawn from the findings and recommendations for further research in the area.

A Review of the Literature  
On Comparative Advertising

In a recent article, William L. Wilkie and Paul W. Farris recommended that comparative advertising calls for increased research in order to determine its overall effectiveness.<sup>7</sup> Without undertaking an empirical experimentation, the authors set out to evaluate the effectiveness of comparative advertising against concepts drawn from the behavioral sciences. Their tentative

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<sup>7</sup>William L. Wilkie and Paul W. Farris, op. cit., pp. 7-15.

conclusion was that comparative advertising may be a powerful tool for the marketing practitioner.

Wilkie and Farris' work and the growing controversy inspired a number of experimental explorations regarding effects of comparative advertising. In this chapter, first the review of several empirical and non-empirical studies are reported; and then a discussion of the evaluation and comparison of only the empirical studies on comparative advertising is presented.

The paucity of research was somewhat alleviated by an empirical evaluation of comparative advertising by R. Dale Wilson.<sup>8</sup> The main purpose of the research was to evaluate comparative advertising messages which provided little or no factual information to the consumer. More specifically, Wilson attempted to test the hypothesis that advertisements that employ non-factual (subjective) comparisons lead to a decreased level of credibility and trustworthiness for those firms which advertise their product offerings in this way. As such,

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<sup>8</sup>R. Dale Wilson, "An Empirical Evaluation of Comparative Advertising Messages: Subjects' Responses on Perceptual Dimensions," in Beverlee B. Anderson (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. III, Proceedings of the Association for Consumer Research Sixth Annual Conference, 1976, pp. 53-57.

the study was designed to explore the differences in the consumers' perceptions and attitudes towards comparative and single-product promotional messages.

The results of Wilson's study supported his main hypothesis that the experimental subjects on the whole evaluated subjective comparative advertising messages more negatively than they did those ads in which competitor's products were not mentioned by name.

In conclusion, Wilson suggested that in cases where brand comparisons are not based on factual information, comparative advertising is not effectual. Moreover, he deduced the warning that comparative ads may further damage the image of the advertising institution. The same argument can be laid against any innovation in marketing: any tool that is not used properly may be harmful to either the employer or to the one upon whom it is employed. Suffice it to say that Wilson's study did not evaluate the use of proper comparative advertising which provides the consumer with objective information.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Anthony C. Chevines, "A Case for Comparative Advertising," Journal of Advertising, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1975, pp. 31-36.

Another empirical work done in the area of comparative advertising was undertaken by Linda L. Golden. The thrust of her investigation was to determine the relative influence of comparative advertising and conventional advertising upon purchase intentions. Moreover, this investigation explored the effects of the communications (comparative advertising and conventional advertising) with respect to the following independent variables which may affect consumer reactions to comparative ads:<sup>10</sup>

1. The effects of the consumer's degree of brand loyalty towards the competing brand in a comparative advertisement
2. The effects of the competitive position of the advertising brand
3. The effects of claim substantiation  
(Specifically the study attempted to find the effects of the foregoing variables on five dependent variables such as purchase intentions, believability, credibility, usefulness of information and quantity of information.)

The results indicated that at  $P \leq .01$  there was no significant main effect of advertisement copy type. In other words, the purchase intention ratings elicited from the comparative advertisement was not significantly

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<sup>10</sup>Linda L. Golden, "Consumer Reaction to Direct Brand Comparisons in Advertisement," an unpublished dissertation, University of Florida, December, 1975.

different from the ratings of the non-comparative advertisement. Additionally, the results indicated that there was no significant main effect of competitive position, claim substantiation or theme. Only two interaction effects were reported as being significant: the interaction of advertisement copy type and theme and the interaction of competitive position and theme.

In conclusion, Golden stated that a comparative advertisement was no more effective an influence upon purchase intentions than was a conventional advertisement where other communication factors (source, message, etc.) are not taken into consideration. Golden is, of course, assuming that attitude and behavioral intentions are predictors of overt behavior.

Recently, V. Kanti Prasad reported in *Journal of Marketing Research* a laboratory experiment performed to assess the effectiveness of comparative advertising in relation to its "Brand X" version in which no competitors name is explicitly mentioned.<sup>11</sup> The evaluation of communications-effectiveness was in terms of message recall,

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<sup>11</sup>V. Kanti Prasad, "Communication-Effectiveness of Comparative Advertising: A Laboratory Analysis, Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XIII (May 1976), pp. 128-37.

claim credibility and perceptions of competitive position of the sponsoring brand.

Four hypotheses were specifically tested:  $H_1$  - the aggregate levels of message recall of a comparative advertisement will be higher than those for "Brand X" advertisement;  $H_2$  - the recall effectiveness of a comparative ad in relation to a "Brand X" ad will depend upon consumers' prior preferences for the competitor brand which is explicitly named in the former;  $H_3$  - perceived credibility of the claims of a comparative advertisement will be lower among consumers who prefer the competitor's brand explicitly named in the advertisement than among others;  $H_4$  - consumers will perceive the competitive position of the sponsoring brand in its product class to be higher when exposed to a comparative advertisement than when exposed to a "Brand X" advertisement.

In conclusion, the results of this experiment indicated that, on the whole, the message recall effectiveness of the comparative advertisement was higher than that of its "Brand X" type; its brand recall effectiveness was equal to that of the "Brand X" counterpart; and its claim recall effectiveness was considerably higher. It must be noted that the positive results obtained in favor of

comparative advertising is most likely due to the fact that Prasad used relatively high involving (expensive) products in his experiment.

In 1975, the Research Department of Ogilvy and Mather Advertising Agency conducted an empirical study to investigate the effectiveness of comparative advertising.<sup>12</sup> The major focus of the study was to explore the four dependent variables of communication messages: believability, confusion, sponsor identification, and persuasive effectiveness.

The sample size for this study consisted of 450 female heads of households. Three experimental treatments were used which were each viewed by separate sub-samples of 150 subjects. Each sub-sample was exposed to eight actual television commercials for packaged goods in one of three formats:

1. All comparative ads with the exception of one non-comparative control commercial
2. All non-comparative ads with the exception of one comparative control commercial

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<sup>12</sup>Ogilvy and Mather Research, "The Effects of Comparative Television Advertising That Names Competing Brands," unpublished paper, 1975.



### 3. A mix of comparative and non-comparative commercials

After being exposed to the treatment, subjects were asked whether or not the commercials were believable and confusing. The respondents indicated that the comparative commercials were significantly more confusing and significantly less believable than their non-comparative counterparts.

Furthermore, the comparative commercials received significantly lower sponsor identification than the non-comparative version. The comparative treatment ads resulted in greater sponsor mis-identification than the non-comparative treatments. As for the persuasive variable, there was no significant difference in persuasiveness among all of the three experimental commercial exposures.

In conclusion, it was stated:

Our study of television commercials that name names suggests that there is little to be gained from this type of advertising for: the advertising industry, the advertiser, and the consumer. The only one who may benefit is the competitor who is named in the advertising.<sup>13</sup>

Here is another instance of measuring the effectiveness of comparative advertising through the spectacles

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

of the consumer rather than through his overt behavior. The consumers' reports, based on their perceptions, are construed by Ogilvy and Mather researchers to be as valid indicators of the former's actual behavior in the marketplace.

Terence A. Shimp presented a paper at the AMA Conference held in Chicago, April 14-17, 1975, in which he formulated a typology of comparative advertising.<sup>14</sup> The main objectives of this paper were, first, to extend Wilkie and Farris' conceptualization of comparison advertising by providing alternative forms of comparison advertising; secondly, to apply a methodology of content analysis to a large sample of television commercials aired on network television during 1973-1974 to derive findings on the typology; and finally, to discuss the nature of "incomplete comparatives" as a special form of comparison advertising.

Wilkie and Farris' definition of comparison advertising served as the basis for constructing a typology. The two authors defined comparison advertising as that which:

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<sup>14</sup>Terence A. Shimp, "Comparison Advertising in National Television Commercials: A Content Analysis with Specific Emphasis Devoted to the Issue of Incomplete Comparative Assertions," AMA, Edward M. Mazze, ed., 1975 Combined Proceedings, series no. 37, pp. 504-508.

- a. compares two or more specifically named or recognizably presented brands of the same generic product class, and
- b. makes such a comparison in terms of one or more specific product attributes.

Shimp contended that if a certain advertisement fails to satisfy either or both of these conditions, by the above definition, it is not accepted as a case of comparison advertising. He finds this definition to be much too restrictive. Alternative forms of comparison advertising do exist, and failure to recognize these . . . "forms can only lead to research which focuses on a limited range of the total spectrum of response functions generated from the generic class of comparison advertising claims."<sup>15</sup>

Through content analysis, it was found that comparison advertising of the form defined by Wilkie and Farris was quite infrequently used in the sampled TV commercials. Secondly, this study indicated that "incomplete" forms of comparison advertising are used with great frequency in TV commercials. The research furthermore challenged the utility of incomplete comparison claims, from a public policy perspective. The main argument dwelled on

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 505.

the contention that incomplete comparison assertions are ambiguous and therefore potentially misleading and dysfunctional to some of the audiences receiving such messages.

Another important contribution to comparative advertising literature came from Stanley M. Ulanoff's recent work.<sup>16</sup> Contrary to the preceding research studies which focused primarily on the effectiveness and impact of comparative advertising on the consumers, Ulanoff's major concern was an historical retrospective. In a Marketing Science Institute working paper, he explored the rationales behind the long-standing reluctance of advertisers to name competitors' names; he contrasted this norm with the practice in the personal selling field which availed itself extensively of comparative advertising; and he traced the practice from what he called the "early rebels," who employed "beeps" to imply specific competitors; and finally he discussed the merits of the more forthright comparative ads of recent appearance in the print and broadcast media.

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<sup>16</sup>Stanley M. Ulanoff, "Comparison Advertising: An Historical Retrospective," working paper (Cambridge, Mass.: Marketing Science Institute, February, 1975).

Ulanoff stated that the U.S. economy has been based on competition. Up until recently, however, advertising has, with minor exception, abstained from specifying competitors by name. This strong taboo of naming names was not a government regulation, but a self-imposed restriction adhered to religiously by advertisers, agencies, the associations, and media. Such an unwritten law which went counter competition continued despite a general trend toward more liberal thinking, and advertising practitioners observed it for fear of engaging in a morally wrong practice. Hawking the advantages of your wares as compared directly to your competitors was considered "dirty pool" -- even though this was practiced in personal selling. The primary rationale for not naming competitors or making direct comparisons with their products stemmed from the norm that Americans have always prided themselves on their spirit of "fair play."

In the early part of the eighteenth century, printed advertisements named competitors. According to an article written by the famous poet and essayist, Joseph Addison, half the advertising of the period was of a comparative nature. In contrast, during modern times, many advertisers seemingly preferred to compete unilaterally in order to avoid a direct confrontation.

An early form of advertising which somewhat deviated from unilateral advertising, and thus infringed upon the sanctity of the competition in advertising, was the use of a hypothetical competitor which may or may not have had the same characteristics of the actual competing product. In this instance, the competitor was called "Brand X." The created entity, "Brand X," was attacked by the advertiser with impunity. The over use of "Brand X" caused comedians to relate jokes about it. Another way to avoid naming competition was done by means of the "beep" sound, Whenever the name of competition came in the copy of a commercial on the air, instead of mentioning verbally, it was electronically obliterated by a "beep" sound.

Recently, however, the "Brand X" and "beep" sound methods gave way to direct competition whereby the advertiser openly confronts his competitors by naming names and/or comparing his product attribute(s) with that of the competitor. Ulanoff argued that such comparison advertising offers consumers and advertisers some advantages. The greatest benefit accrues to the consumer for he or she fares best when the competition is the keenest. Comparative advertising involves two or more manufacturers of similar products in open confrontation;

a confrontation whereby the consumer may benefit from knowing the advantages of one brand over another.

Another advantage to the consumer lies in price information which helps him or her in making decisions regarding similar products. Moreover, the small producer, the new company, or the firms with low promotion budgets can compete with the goliaths of the industry through comparison advertising.

As for the industry leaders, comparative advertising provides them with impetus to maintain their position being challenged by gadfly competitors. To maintain their lead, the giant manufacturers must strive for higher levels of superiority.

Comparison advertising also has some disadvantages which may result from abuse or the false or improper application of it. Loss of credibility is one disadvantage. The fear that respected brand names might be abused and that the entire advertising industry's image might be damaged beyond repair is a legitimate concern. Statements made by one advertiser about another along with the ensuing denials and counter claims may cause the consumer to become confused and not know whom to believe.

Another disadvantage is that advertising can be unfair. If, through comparison advertising, a minor product feature (e.g., a chrome knob on the gear shift in an automobile) would constitute superiority, then it would be an unfair claim. Comparison ads that play on words or trivial product characteristics might be identified as "dumb ads" and a waste of time and money by the consumer. "Dumbs" may also detract from the importance of comparative advertising.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, Ulanoff suggested that making comparisons in advertising can stimulate product improvements to the advantage of the consumer in the same manner that SOS thanked Brillo in a comparative advertisement by saying: "Thanks pink pad for keeping me on my toes. Maybe I can do the same for you sometime."

#### Evaluation and Comparison of Empirical Research on Comparative Advertising

As the preceding review of the literature indicates, only a handful of marketing studies have been conducted

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<sup>17</sup> Stanley M. Ulanoff, op. cit., p. 18.



recently which deal directly with comparative advertising effects. In this section only the empirical works on comparative advertising are evaluated and compared.

Golden's study is one of the first major studies on communication-effectiveness of comparative advertising. A sample of 594 students were exposed to comparative and non-comparative messages for three deodorant brands (either Sure, Right Guard or Secure, and a fictitious new brand). Golden concluded that there were no significant differences in the effectiveness of comparative and conventional advertising across brand attitude and perceptual measures.

Before accepting Golden's findings as unequivocal, several aspects of this pioneering study should be discussed. One shortcoming of the research design is that Golden had subjects view the experimental ad in the absence of other ads or editorial material. Such a procedure has detracted from the generalizability of the research. A second shortcoming of the study arises from the weak nature of the experimental manipulations. On a nine-point scale, both the comparative and conventional messages were very ineffective, registering a mean value of about '3'. The failure of the subjects to believe any of

the claims made, either in comparative or conventional form, may have contributed to the acceptance of the null hypotheses.

Wilson's study was similar to Golden's experiment in that they both measured effectiveness through the attitude and perceptions of their subjects. Wilson's study, however, differs with a distinct advantage of controlling closely the experimental environment by asking subjects to respond to eight different messages compared to the exposure of a single message in Golden's research. On two out of seven perceptual dimensions on which the subjects rated the messages, differential effects were found. Comparative ads were judged as less believable and more offensive than their conventional counterparts.

Both Golden and Wilson used non-factual comparisons. In the latter's study, for instance, the following comparative statement was employed: "The cavity fighters in Colgate make it more effective than any other toothpaste -- even Crest." Such unsupported statements made against a leading brand makes the subjects more likely to perceive the ads as particularly unbelievable and offensive. Therefore, neither Golden's nor Wilson's experiments adequately assessed the differential impact

of factual and believable messages coming from comparative and conventional ads.

The empirical study conducted by the Research Department of Ogilvy and Mather presents an improvement over Golden's and Wilson's studies. Ogilvy and Mather employed actual television commercials instead of simulated print ads.

Several difficulties cramp the generalizability of the study. First, different copy formats were used for the three treatments in the Ogilvy and Mather experiments whereas only similar ones were used both in Golden's and Wilson's undertakings. As such, the comparative and conventional equivalents were not directly comparable.

Secondly, exposing the subjects to seven comparative commercials and one conventional commercial in the comparative advertising treatment simultaneously makes the situation quite unrealistic. Information overload obtained from being exposed to too many comparative ads are likely to produce irritation in the subjects and thus cause them to misidentify the sponsors.<sup>18</sup> In 1976,

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<sup>18</sup>Jacob Jacoby, Donald E. Speller, and Carol A. Kohn, "Brand Choice Behavior as a Function of Information Load," Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XI, February 1974, pp. 63-9.

Philip Levine at Ogilvy and Mather made a study similar to the 1975 study. He found that when only one comparative commercial was seen among a group of non-comparative ads, the persuasive power of the comparative ad was significantly higher.<sup>19</sup>

Shimp's study is different than Golden's, Wilson's, and Ogilvy and Mather's studies in one major respect. Shimp employed content analysis approach while the others used the experimental method. A sample of 243 television commercials aired on network television during 1973-74 was analyzed. It was found that incomplete comparative advertising (comparative ad versus "Brand X") was more frequently used than complete comparisons based on Wilkie and Farris' definition. The frequency of usage of 'incomplete comparison object' constituted 48 per cent of the comparison assertions made in the commercials under study. Although Shimp's research came up with important findings, it failed to explore the effectiveness of comparative advertising versus conventional versions which is the crux of the controversy over comparison advertising.

While Golden's, Wilson's, and Ogilvy and Mather's studies investigated comparative versus non-comparative

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<sup>19</sup>Philip Levine, "Commercials That Name Competing Brands," Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 16, No. 6, December 1976, p. 10.

advertising, Prasad's research examined the distinction between comparative versus "Brand X" communications. Thus he tried to find the impact of making explicit comparisons with known competitors by exposing 202 student subjects to comparison and "Brand X" versions of an advertisement for a hypothetical brand (Ronar camera). Like Wilson's study, subjects were presented with a 12 page portfolio consisting of two articles from a national magazine, and five advertisements which included the experimental ads. This procedure was an improvement over Golden's treatment ads that were presented without other ads or editorial material. In contrast to prior studies, the results of Prasad's study indicated that brand recall effectiveness of the comparative ad was equal to that of the "Brand X" advertisement, and that its claim recall effectiveness was considerably higher.

With the exception of Shimp's study, the experiments reported so far seem to have suffered from lack of realism. The contrived environment of the laboratory cripples results for application to the real world situation. It would be safe to conclude that all of the preceding studies have not adequately assessed the communication-effectiveness of comparative advertising.

As the preceding studies indicate, major research efforts to date have dealt with consumers' preferences and intentions to buy after being exposed to a comparative advertisement. There seems to be no empirical work done in determining the effectiveness of comparative advertising in the action stage of the persuasive process, namely purchase of the advertised product. The acid test for the success of a persuasive communication depends on the change of behavior of the audience. A well known marketing research practitioner stated in an often-quoted article that to measure the effectiveness of advertising, measure the increase in the number of consumers who actually buy products after exposure to it.<sup>20</sup>

In sum, these studies have attempted to measure the attitudes and intentions to buy of their experimental subjects in the laboratory, and have employed low involving products (convenience goods of minimum economic risk) for their studies. Conclusions drawn from these studies based on certain common assumptions which will be discussed in Chapter II, throw strong doubt on the relative effectiveness of comparative advertising on consumers'

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<sup>20</sup>Ward J. Jenssen, "Sales Effects of TV, Radio, and Print Advertising," Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 6, No. 2, June 1966, p. 2.

attitudes prior to purchase, and primarily on consumers' purchase behavior in the marketplace.

The major assumptions made by these studies are discussed in the following chapter to show that there is still an important gap in the research endeavor on comparative advertising effectiveness.

## CHAPTER II

### SALES EFFECTIVENESS OF COMPARATIVE ADVERTISING: AN AREA IN NEED OF EXPLORATION

Past laboratory experiments such as Wilson's, Golden's, and Ogilvey and Mather's have attempted to measure the effectiveness of comparative advertising under certain common explicit or implicit assumptions. The most notable assumptions pertain to (1) the evaluation of comparative advertising through the attitude construct,<sup>1</sup> (2) the assumption that intention to buy is predictor of consumer's overt behavior, and (3) the assumption that the Hierarchy-of-Effects should be used as theoretical basis in conjunction with low involvement products, as their studies show.

In this chapter, these three assumptions for measuring comparative advertising's effectiveness are evaluated; then a discussion ensues which indicates that the impact of comparative advertising so far has only

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<sup>1</sup>Peter M. Ginter and Jack M. Starling, "Comparative Advertising: Environmental, Regulatory and Effectiveness Issues," a paper presented at Southwestern Marketing Association Conference, New Orleans, March 23-26, 1977, pp. 10-11.



partially, if not inadequately, been assessed by previous studies. Finally, a recursive version of the Hierarchy-of-Effects model is suggested as a better theoretical basis for measuring comparative advertising versus conventional advertising effectiveness in low involvement purchase situations.

### Attitude Construct

In studying the impact of comparative advertising, researchers have followed the traditional Hierarchy-of-Effects models and thus assumed that the consumer operates through the attitude construct. The Hierarchy-of-Effects models in the advertising process are based on the notion that the primary objective of advertising is to change first attitude and then behavior of selected groups of consumers by proposing that behavioral changes occur by means of moving the consumers through a sequence of steps.<sup>2</sup> For example Colley maintains that "Advertising attempts to move consumers from unawareness of a product or service

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<sup>2</sup>Harper W. Boyd, Michael L. Ray and Edward C. Strong, "An Attitudinal Framework for Advertising Strategy," Journal of Marketing, Vol. 36, April 1972, pp. 27-28.

... to awareness ... to comprehension ... to conviction ... to action."<sup>3</sup> Strong's AIDA formula (attention, interest, desire, action) is also in the same vein of thinking.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, Lavidge and Steiner's model is an extension of AIDA stretched to awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and action.<sup>5</sup>

To date, models for measuring advertising effectiveness hinge on the assumption that the advertising process moves consumers through several hierarchical stages of a buying continuum. However, all have basically three stages in the common: (1) awareness, (2) attitude change, (3) purchase.<sup>6</sup> It is usually hypothesized that these stages of the continuum are linked together in a

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<sup>3</sup>R. H. Colley, ed., Defining Advertising Goals for Measuring Advertising Results (New York: Association of National Advertisers, Inc., 1961).

<sup>4</sup>E. K. Strong, The Psychology of Selling (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1925).

<sup>5</sup>R. J. Lavidge and G. A. Steiner, "A Model of Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness," Journal of Marketing, October 1961, pp. 59-62.

<sup>6</sup>Michael L. Rothschild, "Advertising Strategies for High and Low Involvement Situations," Wisconsin working paper 2-77-7, University of Wisconsin, Madison, February 1977, p. 3; Kristian S. Palda, "The Hypothesis of Hierarchy of Effects: A Partial Evaluation," Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 3, February 1966, pp. 13-14.

causative chain through which advertising produces a change in the consumer's attitude toward the product; this in turn induces a purchase response.

However, there is a great deal of evidence that consumers do not always go through the traditional order of stages.<sup>7</sup> The Hierarchy-of-Effects has been criticized by some marketing researchers mainly on the grounds that the progression is not necessarily a one-way sequence from awareness to purchase, and that not all individuals will proceed through each step in the hierarchy.<sup>8</sup> Palda, in particular, maintains that all the steps between initial awareness and final purchase need not always occur, and that, if they do, they need not occur in the same order.<sup>9</sup> Palda supports his position with evidence from a number of studies.

Aaker and Day in an empirical study concluded that advertising can influence behavior (purchase) by working

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<sup>7</sup>V. Parker Lessig and Beverlee B. Anderson, "Do Different Consumers Operate Under the Same Preference Model?" Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 4, Nos. 1 & 2, Winter, Spring 1976, p. 429.

<sup>8</sup>Robertson, Thomas S., "Low-Commitment Consumer Behavior," Journal of Advertising Research, 16, (April 1976), p. 20.

<sup>9</sup>Kristian S. Palda, "The Hypothesis of Hierarchy of Effects: A Partial Evaluation," Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 3, February 1966, pp. 13-24.

through awareness; and "one surprising result was that the influence of advertising seems to go from awareness directly to behavior and does not operate through the attitude construct."<sup>10</sup>

By assuming that the attitude construct has the explanatory power, the studies on comparative advertising have possibly misevaluated the true effectiveness of this promotional strategy.

#### Attitude as Predictor of Behavior

It has long been assumed in researching the effectiveness of conventional versus comparative ads that a change in attitude will result in a change in behavior. For example, in Golden's study respondents were asked whether or not they would purchase the brand advertised through comparative advertising or the competing brand; since she did not find significant difference between their intentions to buy both brands, she concluded that the effectiveness of comparative advertising has no more impact on purchase intentions than that of conventional advertising.

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<sup>10</sup>D. A. Aaker and George S. Day, "A Recursive Model of Communication Process," in Multivariate Analysis in Marketing, ed. by D. A. Aaker and G. S. Day, (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1971), p. 113.

"The assumption is made that the stronger the emotion (attitude), negative or positive, the greater the action-tendency involved and the greater the predisposition to buy the product -- an assumption as yet unproven," points out Kassarjian.<sup>11</sup> Since the relationship between attitude, intentions, and purchase (behavior) is tenuous,<sup>12</sup> the communication-effect research results really have not adequately determined the efficacy of comparative advertising.

An overview of research based on Fishbein's models on consumer products does show acceptably high correlations between attitudes and behavioral intentions (intentions to buy). However, the correlations between behavioral intentions and overt behavior remain not only poor, but generally lower than those obtained in social psychological studies.<sup>13</sup> In fact, such an argument has

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<sup>11</sup>Harold H. Kassarjian and Waltroud M. Kassarjian, "Attitudes Under Low Commitment Conditions," a paper presented at AMA Attitude Research Conference, Las Vegas, March 6-9, 1977, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup>M. Fishbein and I. Aizen, "Attitudes and Opinions," Annual Review of Psychology 23:487-554.

<sup>13</sup>Michael J. Ryan and E. H. Bonfield, "The Fishbein Extended Model and Consumer Behavior," Journal of Consumer Research, 2 (September 1975), 118-136.

created a controversy and established two schools of thought. There are those who believe that attitude change results in behavioral change,<sup>14</sup> and therefore both are significantly related. For example, Kair's study reported that good commercials affect both attitude and behavior;<sup>15</sup> Fendrich's study suggested that attitudes will predict behavior if proper attention is paid to measurement.<sup>16</sup>

There are others who believe that behavior cannot be predicted from attitudes. There is a considerable body of evidence that shows that attitudes and behavior are very weakly related.<sup>17</sup> One such finding came from the classical study of LaPiere in 1934.<sup>18</sup> Festinger,

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<sup>14</sup>Grey Matter, Vol. 39, November 1968, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>J. K. Kair, "Splitville: A Split-Halt Study of Television Commercial Pretesting," Dissertation Abstracts, Vol. 27, pp. 2894-2895 (1965).

<sup>16</sup>J. M. Fendrich, "A Study of the Association Among Verbal Attitudes, Commitment, and Overt Behavior in Different Experimental Conditions," Social Forces, Vol. 45, 1967, pp. 347-355.

<sup>17</sup>George S. Day, "Theories of Attitude Structure and Change," in Consumer Behavior: Theoretical Sources, ed. by Scott Ward and Thomas S. Robertson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 322-323.

<sup>18</sup>R. T. LaPiere, "Attitude vs. Actions," Social Forces, Vol. 13, 1934, pp. 230-237.

for example, could not find any consistent evidence that attitudes and behavior are related.<sup>19</sup>

A. W. Wicker reviewed 32 studies on the attitude-behavior relationship and concluded "that it is considerably more likely that attitudes will be unrelated or only slightly related to overt behaviors than that attitudes will be closely related to actions."<sup>20</sup> Fishbein provides further negative evidence that attitudes and behavior are related by concluding that:

Indeed, what little evidence there is to support any relationship between attitude and behavior comes from studies that a person tends to bring his attitude into line with his behavior rather than from studies demonstrating that behavior is a function of attitude.<sup>21</sup>

There is considerable evidence obtained from both social psychological and marketing studies that unidimensional,

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<sup>19</sup>Leon Festinger, "Behavioral Support for Opinion Change," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 28, 1964, pp. 404-417.

<sup>20</sup>A. W. Wicker, "Attitudes Versus Actions: The Relationship of Verbal and Overt Behavioral Responses to Attitude Objects," The Journal of Social Issues, No. 25 (Autumn 1969), p. 65.

<sup>21</sup>M. Fishbein, "Attitude and the Prediction of Behavior," in M. Fishbein (ed.), Attitude Theory and Measurement (New York: Wiley, 1967), p. 477.

affect-type models are poor predictors of subsequent behavior.<sup>22</sup>

Since there is evidence that behavior may change attitudes, it would be very worthwhile to discover if comparative advertising has greater impact on behavior of the consumer, which will, in turn, modify his attitudes.

#### Theoretical Basis for Measuring Effectiveness

Since the previous studies on comparative versus conventional advertising used low involving products, the adoption of the Hierarchy of Effects as a theoretical basis was inconsistent.<sup>23</sup> Recent research findings indicate that the ability of advertising to influence movement through the hierarchy will depend upon the many variables, including the appeals, the economic risk involved in purchasing the product, the social risk, the

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<sup>22</sup>R. N. Nostrom, "Cognitive and Behavioral Dimensions of Communicative Attitudes," Journal of Communication, 1970, 20 (4), 359-369.

<sup>23</sup>F. Stewart DeBruicker, "An Appraisal of Low Involvement Consumer Information Processing," a paper presented at the AMA Attitude Research Conference, Las Vegas, March 6-9, 1977, p. 1.



psychological risk, etc.<sup>24</sup> One study concluded that Hierarchy-of-Effects is appropriate for high involvement high commitment products in which case the consumer moves through the attitude construct to behavior response.<sup>25</sup>

Since virtually all studies on comparative versus conventional advertising used low involvement products,<sup>26</sup> they failed to employ the correct theoretical basis for interpretation and gathering of data on the right variable: namely, consumer purchases in the marketplace.

Lessig and Anderson hypothesized in a study that one attitude model cannot be formulated which is universally applicable to all consumers under all conditions. Evidence from their findings led them to conclude that

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<sup>24</sup>Jacob Hornik, "A Circumplex Model for the Behavioral Constructs Toward Television Advertising," Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Vol. 4, 1, 2, Winter, Spring, 1976, p. 485.

<sup>25</sup>W. O. Bearden, Ted L. Chiao, Roy G. Stout, and Arch G. Woodside, "Attitudes Versus Behavior -- Lessons Learned From Cross-Lagged Correlations," a paper presented at the AMA Attitude Research Conference, Las Vegas, March 6-9, 1977, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup>Michael B. Mazis, "A Theoretical and Empirical Examination of Comparative Advertising," an unpublished Research paper, Department of Marketing, University of Florida, 1977, p. 3.

there are two major reasons why a model may fail to predict. First, the data which is used in the execution of the model may not be consistent with the assumptions and the data requirements of the model and, secondly, with its underlying theory.<sup>27</sup>

Kassarjian regrets the fact that instead of using the most parsimonious explanation such as discrimination, shaping behavior, and reward, consumer researchers in marketing have turned to intervening variables and hypothetical constructs such as attitudes and personality for prediction and then have applied these same tools to the study of low involving products.<sup>28</sup>

Instead of tapping the attitude of consumers, sales volume should have been measured since the studies used products like deodorants (Golden) and detergents (Ogilvey and Mather).

The sequential assumption of the Hierarchy of Effects has been questioned in the past, but recently research

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<sup>27</sup>V. Parker Lessig and Beverlee B. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 438-39.

<sup>28</sup>Harold H. Kassarjian and Waltroud M. Kassarjian, op. cit., p. 15.

evidence supports this doubt, especially for low involving purchases such as buying of most convenience goods for they involve low-risk decisions (consumer knows he is not risking much money).

Low involvement purchase has been defined as the purchase of convenience goods under such conditions as low product cost, low importance of the product to the consumer, low interest due to some previous experience with the product category, limited number of distinguishing attributes among alternative brands, and low levels of salience attached to the attributes of the product considered by the consumer.<sup>29</sup>

Bearden, Chiao, Stout, and Woodside reported recently at an AMA Attitude Conference, March 1977, that "The traditional idea that attitudes change before behavior occurs is valid in high involvement buying situations, but not in low involvement ones."<sup>30</sup> To study the relationship between attitudes and behavior in the buying of low

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<sup>29</sup>Michael L. Ray, "Attitude as Communication Response," Faculty Working Paper No. 229, Stanford University, 1974; T. S. Robertson, "Low-commitment Consumer Behavior," Journal of Advertising Research, 16 (April 1976), pp. 19-24.

<sup>30</sup>"Cross-lagged Correlations Back Low-Involvement Buying Theory," Marketing News, March 25, 1977, Vol. X, No. 18, p. 2.

involvement products, the authors studied attitudes, behavior, beliefs, and intentions for four brands of beer of 172 male household heads from the statewide consumer panel of the University of South Carolina. Additionally, they studied the same factors for five soft drink brands of 184 female household heads from the same panel. They stated that the findings from these studies further supported the existence of low involvement purchase situations in which behavior may precede affect. "Consumers may develop brand attitudes toward low involvement products after instead of before they buy and use them"<sup>31</sup> The authors did not present an explanation for the consumers movement from awareness directly to behavior, except that the purchase situation involved an economically low-risk product.

Herbert Krugman, however, examined the results of recent experiments in brain physiology, and stated that under conditions of low involvement the left hemisphere of the brain functions; while under conditions of high involvement, the right hemisphere functions. He, therefore, concluded that in a low involvement situation one

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<sup>31</sup>W. O. Bearden, et al., op. cit., p. 1.

might look for gradual shifts in perceptual structure where awareness and minimal comprehension occur, followed by trial and then attitude change, in that order.<sup>32</sup>

Based on Krugman's theoretical work, Ray and his colleagues proposed the Low Involvement Hierarchy in which behavior precedes attitude (Awareness → Behavior → Attitude). This model stands in contrast to the traditional Hierarchy-of-Effects model (Awareness → Attitude → Behavior).<sup>33</sup> Research findings of Rothschild<sup>34</sup> and others indicate that the Low Involvement Hierarchy model is more appropriate to measure the effectiveness of advertising for low involving purchase situations. However, this model has not yet been put to empirical test in conjunction with comparative advertising.

#### Purchase Priority Model of Effects

As an alternative model to measure the effectiveness of comparative advertising, a purchase priority model is

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<sup>32</sup>Herbert E. Krugman, "Low Involvement Theory in The Light of New Brain Research," a paper presented at the AMA Attitude Research Conference, Las Vegas, March 6-9, 1977.

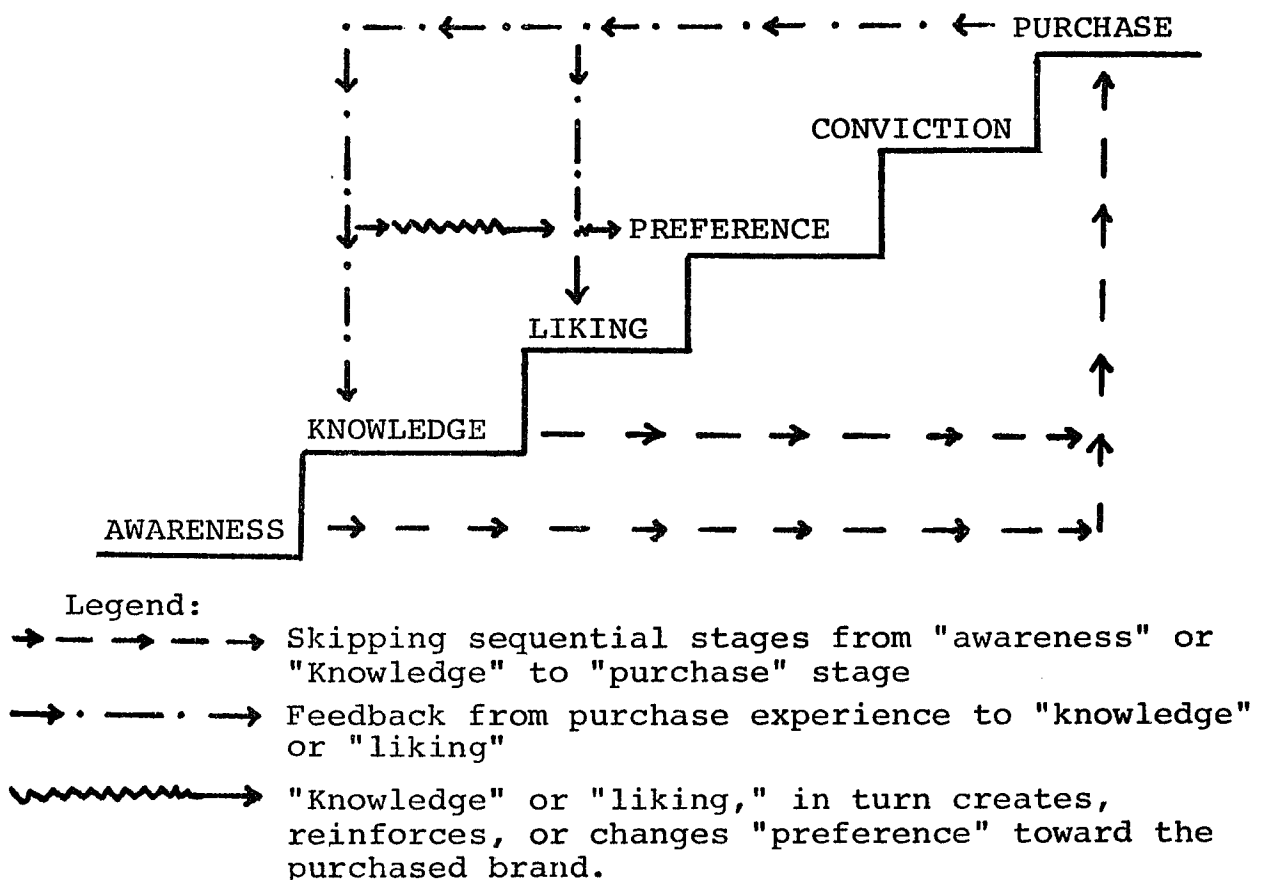
<sup>33</sup>Michael L. Ray, "Marketing Communication and the Hierarchy-of-Effects," in New Models for Mass Communication Research, ed. by Peter Clark (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1973), pp. 147-176.

<sup>34</sup>Michael L. Rothschild, op. cit.

proposed in terms of Lavidge and Steiner's model as shown in Figure 2.1.

FIGURE 2.1

Purchase Priority Model Of Effects:  
How Comparative Advertising May Cause The Consumer To Skip  
Some Sequential Stages In Lavidge And Steiner's  
"Hierarchy-of-Effects" Decision Process



Comparative advertising may first make the consumer "aware" of the advertised brand, then provide the consumer with some "knowledge" that the brand is superior in one or more aspects over its named competitors. Before the consumer is "liking" or forming a "preference" for the advertised brand, s/he may "purchase" it.

The purchase behavior, in turn, may either make the consumer like it or dislike it. In the event that the consumer is satisfied with the purchase, "liking" takes place which influences the consumer to form a "preference" for it. Finally, a favorable attitude is formed. Thus, behavior influences the affective component of the consumer's psyche.

If one dips into his personal experiences, one finds numerous instances where he engaged in an activity just for the sake of "I'll try and see how it is," provided the risk is low. One study reported that out of a sample of 2,800 persons whose attitudes were scaled toward a particular brand, nine per cent of those reporting only an "awareness" of the brand bought it, and 69 per cent of those regarding it as only "acceptable" also bought it.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Charles K. Raymond, "Must Advertising Communicate to See?" Harvard Business Review, Vol. 43 (September-October 1965), pp. 148-161.

### Summary and Conclusion

Communication-effect research which endeavors to discover whether the comparative advertising is achieving the intended communication effects seem to indicate that comparative advertising is not any more effective than its counterpart. In terms of their theoretical framework, Hierarchy-of-Effects, only the cognitive and affective components have been measured and not the behavioral part of the model.

Based on the Hierarchy-of-Effects model, a recursive model was presented in this chapter as an alternative theoretical tool to measure the other side of advertising effectiveness (in relation to low involving products) which is sales effect. While communication-effect advertising research helps advertisers to improve the quality of message, content, and presentation, it reveals very little about how much sales may be generated by it.<sup>36</sup> But the marketing strategist is equally, if not more, concerned to know which strategy yields the highest return on his promotional effort.

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<sup>36</sup>Philip L. Kotler, Marketing Management--Analysis, Planning, and Control (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 1976, p. 370.



The Purchase Priority model (Figure 2.1) necessitates research to evaluate comparative advertising by first measuring behavior (purchase) and then attitudes. This area will be explored in the next chapter in an attempt to fill an important research gap on comparative advertising effectiveness.

## CHAPTER III

### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

In light of the inadequacy of the sequential assumption of the Hierarchy-of-effects in measuring comparative advertising effects through attitudes in low involvement purchase situations, this study undertook to measure both attitude and purchase by means of the Hierarchy-of-Effects model and the Purchase Priority model, respectively. The data obtained were utilized in explaining comparative advertising effectiveness results through each model.

More specifically, this study consisted of two major phases:

In Phase I, this study followed the same theoretical assumption as used by previous studies in evaluating the differential effects of comparative versus conventional advertising strategies through the attitude construct of the Hierarchy-of-Effects model.

In Phase II, this study determined the effectiveness of comparative versus conventional advertising through

the overt behavior (purchase) under the assumption of the Purchase Priority model. The rationale for studying Phase I and II was to attempt to show that by adopting an appropriate theoretical basis, the efficacy of comparative advertising can be accurately assessed.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to discuss the attitude dimension and the purchase dimension of the study, and based upon this discussion several testable hypotheses are presented.

#### Attitude and Purchase Dimensions

Earlier studies have reported that comparative advertising has no greater, and in some cases even lesser, effect than conventional advertising has on consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. As previously mentioned the theoretical basis (Hierarchy-of-Effects) for these studies adheres to the causative sequential assumption of the consumers' movement from one stage to another. Consequently, when measuring comparative advertising effectiveness, only the attitudes were measured. The results of measuring attitudes were low as is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Comparative vs. Conventional Advertising Effectiveness  
Results Obtained Under the Assumption Of The  
Hierarchy-Of-Effects Model

Promotional Strategy	Effects on Consumers'		
	Attitude	Purchase Intention	Purchase
Comparative Ads	Low	Low	Low*
Conventional Ads	Low	Low	Low*

\*Implied

In Phase I of this study, two groups of subjects were exposed to experimental comparative and conventional ads and their attitudes were measured under the Hierarchy-of-Effects model in a way similar to previous studies. This study sought to confirm that attitudes would be low for, as found in the past studies, the products used were low involving. We do not get involved with an unimportant, nonego-involving product; therefore our beliefs and preferences are not strongly held.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>N. T. Hupfer and D. M. Gardner, "Differential Involvement with Products and Issues: An Exploratory Study," in D. M. Gardner, ed., Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Conference of the Asso. for Consumer Research, 1971, 262-69.

The researchers in past studies have implied from their low attitude results that actual purchase is low as indicated in Table 3.1.

Although this study agreed that attitudes are probably low, the contention here was that purchase may be high in spite of the fact that attitudes are low, as is illustrated in Table 3.2. "Though people may not have strong beliefs about attributes under low involvement, . . . they still make purchases and consume products."<sup>2</sup> In low involving situations the consumer may more directly from awareness to purchase for many reasons, some of them being novelty of the item, curiosity about it, new information, cost, etc.

Since the actual purchases have never been measured before, this study attempted to find that purchase is relatively high even though attitude is low.

Beyond noting whether or not actual purchase was high or low, the study attempted to compare the relative

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<sup>2</sup>B. J. Calder, "When Attitudes Follow Behavior--A Self-Perception/Dissonance Interpretation of Low Involvement," paper prepared for the AMA Attitude Research Conference, March 6-9, 1977, Las Vegas, p. 10.

Table 3.2  
Comparative Vs. Conventional Advertising Effectiveness  
Results As Predicted Under The  
Purchase Priority Model

Promotional Strategy	Effects on Consumers'		
	Attitude	Purchase Intention	Purchase
Comparative Ads	→ Low	→ Low	→ High (Predicted)
Conventional Ads	→ Low	→ Low	→ High (Predicted)

effectiveness of comparative versus conventional advertising. Will the effectiveness of comparative advertising be high compared to conventional advertising on a low involving purchase? The contention here was that comparative advertising would be high when compared to conventional advertising as indicated in Table 3.3.

Purchase may be relatively high as a result of a comparative advertisement because information about discriminating attributes that a good comparative ad may give is more important than the consumer's preference to

the competing product. Certain of these intrinsic characteristics of comparative advertising will be discussed in the next section.

Table 3.3

The Relative Impact Of Comparative Advertising Vs.  
Conventional Advertising On Consumers'  
Purchase Behavior

Promotional Strategy	Purchase
Comparative Ads →	High
Conventional Ads →	Low

Recent studies on low involvement have indicated that measurement of advertising communications effectiveness cannot be accurately measured through the attitude construct since the average consumer does not have a strong attitude about relatively inconsequential products.<sup>3</sup> He may purchase a product without preference for various reasons mentioned earlier such as curiosity.

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<sup>3</sup>P. L. Wright, "Cognitive Processes Mediating Acceptance of Advertising," Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 10, February 1973, pp. 53-62.

This study attempted to measure the effectiveness of advertising communications also by means of the Purchase Priority model presented in Chapter II. Thus the actual purchases were measured before inquiring into attitude.

Therefore, in Phase II, two groups of subjects (Groups three and four) were measured first in terms of their purchases rather than attitude; then a week after they had had an opportunity to purchase a product advertised by either a comparative ad (in the case of Group 3) or a conventional ad (in the case of Group 4), their attitudes were measured. Since people do purchase low involving products in vast quantities,<sup>4</sup> this study attempted to note whether or not the actual purchases were high even though the studies through the Hierarchy-of-Effects indicate low purchase intentions, and tried to gain evidence that purchases were in fact high, and that after-purchase attitudes were relatively high as compared to pre-purchase attitudes as is summed in Table 3.4.

Beyond observing whether or not purchase and post-purchase attitude were high for both communication

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<sup>4</sup>Thomas S. Robertson, "Low-Commitment Consumer Behavior," Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 16, April 1976, p. 22.



Table 3.4  
 Comparative Vs. Conventional Advertising Effectiveness  
 In Terms Of Purchase and Post-Purchase Attitude  
 Under The Purchase Priority Model

Promotional Strategy	Attitude	Purchase	Post-Purchase Attitude
Comparative Ad	→ Low	→ High	→ High
Conventional Ad	→ Low	→ High	→ High

strategies on low involving products, this study attempted to compare the effectiveness of comparative versus conventional advertising. The study endeavored to gain evidence that comparative advertising results were relatively high compared to conventional advertising when post-purchase attitude was measured. (See Table 3.5)

In summary, the present study measured both the attitude and purchase response of the experimental subjects under the Hierarchy-of-Effects and Purchase Priority models. It was predicted that the impact of both comparative and conventional advertising would have low effects on the consumer's attitude before purchase, as explained

Table 3.5

The Relative Effectiveness of Comparative Advertising  
Vs. Conventional Advertising On Consumer's  
Post-Purchase Attitude

Promotional Strategy		Post Purchase Attitude
Comparative Ad	—————→	High
Conventional Ad	—————→	Low

by the low involvement theory. However, comparative advertising strategy would have high effect on attitude after purchase, while conventional strategy would have a low effect. The differential effects were due to the specific characteristics of comparative advertising as shown in Table 3.6.

As for the impact of the comparative versus conventional promotional strategy on consumers purchase response, comparative strategy was assumed to have high effect on purchase both before and after the consumer's attitude was measured, while low effects would be obtained from

Table 3.6

Attitude Dimension Of The Study:  
The Differential Effects Of Comparative Advertising Vs.  
Conventional Advertising As Predicted When Attitude  
Is Measured Before And After Purchase

Promotional Strategy	Effects on Attitude:	
	Before Purchase	After Purchase
Comparative Ad	————→ Low	————→ High
Conventional Ad	————→ Low	————→ Low

conventional advertising strategy in both before and after attitude was measured based on the same argument mentioned above, as is portrayed in Table 3.7.

Purchase under comparative advertising strategy was predicated to be higher than that obtained through conventional advertising for the following arguments presented under the collative properties of comparative advertising and performance reports of this strategy from the marketplace.

Table 3.7

Purchase Dimension Of The Study:  
 The Differential Effects Of Comparative Advertising Vs.  
 Conventional Advertising As Predicted When Purchase  
 Is Measured Before And After Attitude

Promotional Strategy	Purchase Response:	
	Before Attitude	After Attitude
Comparative Ad	→ High	→ High
Conventional Ad	→ Low	→ Low

#### Collative Properties of Comparative Advertising

Insights gathered from behavioral science research indicate that comparative ads have differential effects than obtained from conventional advertisements.<sup>5</sup> While the bulk of behavioral research has been focused on the cognitive consistency-seeking behavior of the individual,

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<sup>5</sup>William L. Wilkie and Paul Farris, "Comparison Advertising: Problems and Potential," Journal of Marketing, 39, October 1975, pp. 7-15.

recently the pendulum has swung towards complexity-seeking behavior.<sup>6</sup>

When a comparative ad portrays brand X as superior over brand Y in some respects, the consumer of brand Y would not necessarily avoid the dissonance-producing stimuli (message). Both the Jeeker<sup>7</sup> and the Cannon<sup>8</sup> experiments showed that individuals do not avoid dissonance-producing information if the person is confident that s/he can cope with the dissonant information provided that information is perceived to be useful. In a low involving purchase situation, commitment is low; therefore, dissonance would be minimal. The consumer thus would have no basis to use selective processes since there is little inclination to protect

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<sup>6</sup>W. J. McGuire, "The Current Status of Cognitive Consistency Theories," in Cognitive Consistency, ed. Shel Feldman (New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1966), pp. 1-46.

<sup>7</sup>J. D. Jeeker, "The Cognitive Effects of Conflict and Dissonance," in Conflict, Decision, and Dissonance, ed. L. Festinger (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 21-32.

<sup>8</sup>L. K. Cannon, "Self-Confidence and Selective Exposure to Information," in Conflict, Decision, and Dissonance, ed. L. Festinger (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 83-96.

low commitment beliefs.<sup>9</sup> Festinger points out that "active curiosity and the sheer pleasure of acquiring information for its own sake cannot be ignored in any discussion of voluntary seeking out of new information."<sup>10</sup>

Of the complexity theories which has been concerned with finding explanation for novelty or complexity seeking, Berlyne's "collative approach" explains better comparative ad effectiveness superiority.<sup>11</sup> For novelty-seeking behavior to take place, the individual has to be aroused "awakened" or "alerted." Since we are not dealing with any stimulus, but with novel or discriminating stimuli, Berlyne identifies some of the important and outstanding attributes of the stimulus pattern. These properties are called "collative properties" which include novelty, surprisingness, change, ambiguity, incongruity, blurredness, and power to induce uncertainty.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Thomas S. Robertson, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>10</sup>Leon Festinger, ed., Conflict, Decision, and Dissonance (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964, p. 124.

<sup>11</sup>D. E. Berlyne, Conflict, Arousal, and Curiosity (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1960), p. 290.

<sup>12</sup>D. E. Berlyne, "Motivational Problems Raised by Exploratory and Epistemic Behavior," in Psychology: A Study of Science, ed. S. Koch, Vol. 5 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1963), pp. 290-291.

These are called collative properties for they depend on collation or comparison with others, present and past. The implication is that such properties give the external stimulus (e.g., a comparative ad message) the power to induce and increase arousal. Overt behavior accompanies arousal usually (purchase of the product). DeBruicker maintains that " . . . in order for the tenets of low involvement information processing theories to hold . . . intervening variables such as perceived product differentiation may be important."<sup>13</sup>

In an experiment, Maddi concluded that intermediate degrees of novelty (25 to 75 per cent) were very effective in eliciting choice or investigatory responses.<sup>14</sup> For Maddi the motivational significance of novelty seeking lies in the need for variation. The individual's need for variation results in exploratory responses such as in interacting with the product. Dimensions of novelty in the consumer context would be new products, new

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<sup>13</sup>F. Stewart DeBruicker, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>14</sup>S. R. Maddi, "The Pursuit of Consistency and Variety," in Theories of Cognitive Consistency: A Sourcebook, ed. R. P. Abelson and others (Skokie, Ill.: Rand McNally and Company, 1968), pp. 267-74.

advertising (appeals, medium, etc.), and new promotional devices such as familiar products in unfamiliar surroundings can be viewed as new stimuli.

Copley and Callom's study supported Berlyne's formulation in a buying-behavior context.<sup>15</sup> The hypothesis that a small amount of stimulus ambiguity increases the search behavior of the industrial buyer due to the curiosity motivation -- to relieve the monotony of continually using the same source of supply -- was supported by the results obtained. In one study, Cox pointed out that

" . . . women justify brand switching in product category similar to shampoo on grounds that they had become 'immune' to the brand they had been using. It no longer 'did anything' for them and they deliberately tried a brand with which they had not had any (or recent) experience."<sup>16</sup>

In a study on why people purchase new products Haines reported that fifteen per cent of the respondents had

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<sup>15</sup>T. P. Copley and F. Callom, "Industrial Search Behavior and Perceived Risk," Personal Communication, 1971.

<sup>16</sup>D. F. Cox, "Risk Taking and Information Handling in Consumer Behavior," Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, Boston, 1967.



bought a new product due to its being new.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, this study reported that some people had been persuaded to purchase a new product by information about the new product in advertising.

Venkatesan states that for the consumer who is in a monotonous situation in particular, not only collative properties determine the arousal, but the state of the organism which possesses traces of past experiences that trigger the arousal. Venkatesan further points out that

" . . . a particular brand that had been in use for a period of time might result in arousal because of the monotony involved; but in such a case novelty seeking does not mean the selection of a novel item that has not been considered before; one of the other existing brands in that product class, which may even have been considered earlier, now becomes novel simply because it is new with respect to this consumer's recent experiences."<sup>18</sup>

Venkatesan maintains that "novelty seeking in consumer behavior can be expected to relate to exposure, attention, and awareness of a new stimulus (new product, new ad, etc.)

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<sup>17</sup>G. H. Haines, "A Study of Why People Purchase New Products," in Science, Technology, and Marketing, ed. R. M. Hass (Chicago: American Marketing Association, 1966 Fall Conference Proceedings, 1966), pp. 685-697.

<sup>18</sup>M. Venkatesan, "Cognitive Consistency and Novelty Seeking," in Consumer Behavior Theoretical Sources, ed. S. Ward and T. S. Robertson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973) p. 377.

The next step might be that the novel stimulus is chosen or preferred to the more familiar one by the consumer."<sup>19</sup>

Wallace reviewed a number of studies and found that novel types of information are learned and recalled more easily than familiar ones.<sup>20</sup> Wilkie and Farris conjecture that because the comparative advertising practice is relatively new, it may evoke more attention among the audience due to its format novelty than a conventional "brand X" advertisement.<sup>21</sup>

Maloney exposed housewives to an experimental ad to test his "curiosity" hypothesis with respect to a new test advertisement, and found that curiosity responses were predictive of enhanced consumer intent to interact with the product advertised in the test ad.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 374.

<sup>20</sup>W. P. Wallace, "Review of the Historical, Empirical, and Theoretical Status of the Von Restorff Phenomenon," Psychological Bulletin, 63 (June 1965). p. 421.

<sup>21</sup>Wilkie and Farris, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>22</sup>J. C. Maloney, "Curiosity Versus Disbelief in Advertising," Journal of Advertising Research, 2, 1962, pp. 2-8.

By its nature, comparative advertising contains some "novelty" and "contrast" elements, it serves to increase attention levels of the audience.<sup>23</sup> The consumer thus becomes aware of a stimulus which arouses his or her curiosity to explore for himself and find out about the advertised product either by seeking more information or by outright purchase of the product.

#### Performance Reports of Comparative Advertising

There is also ample evidence from the marketplace that comparative advertising has an edge over conventional advertising. Reports from the marketplace, on one hand, claim that comparative advertising is relatively effective; comparative advertising research studies, on the other hand, indicate just the opposite.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, there is a discrepancy between what the studies have concluded on its effectiveness and what may actually take place at the marketplace. In a recent article, Barry

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<sup>23</sup>Wilkie and Farris, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

<sup>24</sup>N. Giges, "Competitor Ads Take Off After Tylenol," Advertising Age, 47:1, December 6, 1976; "Comparison Ads Bubble in Canada," Advertising Age, 47:2, August 9, 1976; "Comparative Ads on Upswing, So Are Complaints," Broadcasting, 90:51, May 10, 1976; "Comparative Ads on TV on Rise, Researcher Says," Advertising Age, 47:67, March 1, 1976.

and Tremblay have also hinted at this discrepancy between research findings and actual performance of comparative advertising effectiveness.<sup>25</sup>

Available evidence from the marketplace indicate that sales of a large number of companies have increased due to comparative advertising.<sup>26</sup> Avis, Schick, and Gillette's success stories have been mentioned very often in the marketing literature

One of the earliest and longest running campaigns based on comparative advertising is Avis's "We try harder" campaign which started in 1963, and within a year Avis's revenues had increased from \$35,000,000 to \$44,000,000.<sup>27</sup> By early 1973, Avis's revenues from rental car were \$335,000,000.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Thomas E. Barry and Roger L. Tremblay, "Comparative Advertising: Perspectives and Issues," Journal of Advertising, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1975, p. 19.

<sup>26</sup>Advertising Age, October 6, 1975, pp. 1 & 71; "Dartil Sales Booming, Bristol Meyers Claims," Advertising Age, October 6, 1975, p. 1; "Minute Maid Puts the Squeeze on ReaLemon," Advertising Age, October 13, 1975, p. 1; "Comparative Advertising: A Powerful Selling Tool When It Is Not Abused," Advertising Age, April 21, 1975, p. 58.

<sup>27</sup>Media Decisions, September 1973, p. 106.

<sup>28</sup>Wall Street Journal, 26 December 1973, p. 1.

Another example is Schick's comparative advertising campaign. In 1972, Schick's share constituted eight per cent of the \$175 million of the total electric shaver market. Schick then aired a comparative ad, and its Flexamatic market share rose quickly to 24 per cent.<sup>29</sup> The president of Schick has been reported saying that "the campaign has taken Schick . . . from sales of 40,000 units to over one million."<sup>30</sup>

Still another recent example of comparative advertising success stories is that of Gillette's Tame hair conditioner. In May 1974, Gillette was first to broadcast nationally a 30 second comparative commercial. Before Gillette ran its commercial, Alberto Balsam (as a leading challenger) had about 11.5 per cent and Gillette had about 14.6 per cent of the \$175 million hair-conditioner and creme-rinse market. By September 1974, after the commercial ran, Gillette's market share went up to 17.4 per cent and Alberto Balsam's market share declined to 6 per cent.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>"Schick, Inc., Teeter on the Razor's Edge," 38; Wall Street Journal, 26 December 1973, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup>Media Decisions, April 1973, p. 105.

<sup>31</sup>Wall Street Journal, April 16, 1976, p. 1.

Ainsworth citing successes from the marketplace made the observation that " . . . for products whose claims are based on facts, 'brand X' seems to have disappeared from the advertiser's vocabulary."<sup>32</sup> It is estimated that one out of 12 television commercials presently shown on the air during prime-time viewing hours is a comparative advertisement.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to success reports from the marketplace, numerous advertising executives have spoken in favor of comparative advertising sales effectiveness from their own experiences. Two of advertising's most eloquent spokesmen are Anthony S. Chevins, President of Cunningham & Walsh, Inc., and Stanley I. Tannenbaum, Chairman of Kenyon & Eckhardt, who have published their own experiences with comparative advertising in respectable journals.

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<sup>32</sup>Arry Ainsworth, "Comparative Advertising: New Words in a Marketer's Vocabulary," Proceedings of Southern Marketing Association 1974 Conference, Barnett A. Greenberg, ed., p. 267.

<sup>33</sup>Neil Hickey, "It's Goodbye 'Brand X' and Hello Direct Attacks on the Competition by TV Advertiser," TV Guide XXIV (October 2, 1976), 45.

After reviewing a considerable number of comparative advertising case histories in an article entitled "A Case for Comparative Advertising," Chevin raises the crucial question: "Does comparative advertising help?" and he affirmatively answers "Yes, if done right."<sup>34</sup> Chevin further explained that when comparative ads merely compare one brand with another without providing factual information, they simply are not useful to the consumer.<sup>35</sup> R. Dale Wilson empirically tested Chevin's statement and found that comparative advertisements that provide subjective, non-factual information to the consumer are less effective than their counterpart promotional strategy.<sup>36</sup>

Stanley I. Tannenbaum also supports Chevin's stand on comparative advertising in a widely quoted article.<sup>37</sup> After presenting an extensive review of its use in the

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<sup>34</sup>Anthony C. Chevins, "A Case for Comparative Advertising," Journal of Advertising, Vol. 4, No. 2, 1975, p 32.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>R. Dale Wilson, "An Empirical Evaluation of Comparative Advertising Messages: Subjects' Responses on Perceptual Dimensions," in Beverlee B. Anderson, ed., Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. III. Proceedings of the Association for Consumer Research Sixth Annual Conference, 1976, pp. 53-57.

<sup>37</sup>Stanley I. Tannenbaum, "For and Against Comparative Advertising," Advertising Age, July 6, 1976, pp. 25-29.

real world, he concluded by stating: "I hail comparative advertising as our industry's own brand of consumerism, when properly executed. It makes the consumer more conscious of his responsibility to himself to compare before he buys."<sup>38</sup>

Tannenbaum reported that his advertising agency, Kenyon & Eckhardt, has conducted some research to determine perception of consumerism.<sup>39</sup> One of the major findings of these studies indicated that the desire for more information in advertising outranked all other factors. Therefore, he argued that " . . . one of the best ways is to provide information for which consumers are searching and to keep in step with consumerism through the use of comparative advertising."<sup>40</sup> Thus Tannenbaum firmly believes that information obtained through comparative ads are considered quite useful for the purchase decision-making by the consumer provided that the comparison

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>39</sup>Stanley I. Tannenbaum, "Put Consumerism to Work for You--Use Ad Comparisons," Marketing News, December 17, 1976, Vol. X, No. 12, p. 5.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.



technique is employed only in significant product areas where we have demonstrable superiority.<sup>41</sup>

There is, in fact, a considerable body of evidence to support Tannenbaum's foregoing assertions. When the collative properties of comparative advertising arouse the consumer to engage in exploratory behavior, comparative advertising at the same time provides this motivated consumer with easy and costless information by comparing brands against certain attributes.

Usually a comparative ad capitalizes on a discriminating attribute (Brand A excels in attribute<sub>i</sub> over Brand B).<sup>42</sup> The principle of the discriminating attribute is a cognitive concept proposed by Chaffee and Tipton: in an experimental decision situation, consumers expressed a strong preference for additional information concerning those attributes on which the alternative choices differed.<sup>43</sup> Information preference also favored

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>S. H. Chaffee and L. P. Tipton, "Conflict, Information-Seeking and the Discriminating Attribute," in S. H. Chaffee, et. al., Experiments on Cognitive Discrepancies and Communication, Journalism Monographs, No. 14, 1969.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

attributes (those attributes on which alternatives differed or might differ) were considerably higher than similar measures of information seeking about the alternatives themselves. This shows that it is the attribute, not the brands, that is the central factor in decisional information processing.

Tannenbaum's thesis that comparative advertising excels in providing useful information can also find support from Day's recent conclusion. After reviewing a number of studies on information disclosure requirements, Day concluded that more information enhances confidence of the consumer in the choice of alternatives, and possibly increases satisfaction with the purchase through assuring the consumer of his correct product selection.<sup>44</sup>

Results of Guerrero's study on exposure to discrepant information indicated that there was less post-decisional avoidance of messages attacking the brand purchased than of messages attacking the attribute on which that decision

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<sup>44</sup>George S. Day, "Assessing the Effects of Information Disclosure Requirements," Journal of Marketing, 40 (April 1976), pp. 42-52.

was based.<sup>45</sup> This shows again the important role of attributes in consumer information processing, and that information pertaining to a salient attribute is not avoided.

Acquisition costs of information is related to the overall usefulness of information. For example, time, energy, and money constitute some of the major costs involved in obtaining information.<sup>46</sup> Generally, consumers prefer that source which involves the least cost for obtaining the desired information,<sup>47</sup> as Tannenbaum maintains throughout his argument for comparative advertising effectiveness superiority. He encourages companies to use comparative advertising strategy based on his own personal experience and claims, "I've seen

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<sup>45</sup>J. L. Guerrero, "Avoidance, Relevance and Exposure to Discrepant Information," in S. H. Chaffee, et. al., ed., Experiments on Cognitive Discrepancies and Communication, Journalism Monographs, No. 14, 1969.

<sup>46</sup>Wesley C. Bender, "Consumer Purchase Costs--Do Retailers Recognize Them?" Journal of Retailing, Spring 1964, pp. 1-8.

<sup>47</sup>George Fisk, "Media Influence Reconsidered," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 23, 1959, p. 90.

comparative advertising literally turn around market share overnight. It works."<sup>48</sup>

The preceding theoretical and empirical studies indicate the possibility that comparative advertising has superior differential effects on consumer purchase behavior than conventional ads can have. Numerous companies and advertising executives have provided reports from the marketplace that their sales increased due to comparative advertising.<sup>49</sup> Such field reports provide additional support for the conjecture that comparative advertising has favorable differential effects.

### Hypotheses to be Tested

Consideration of the foregoing research findings on low involvement theory, the collative properties of

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<sup>48</sup>Stanley I. Tannenbaum, "Put Consumerism to Work for You--Use Ad Comparisons," op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>49</sup>Advertising Age, October 6, 1975, pp. 1 & 71; "Datril Sales Booming, Bristol Meyers Claims," Advertising Age, October 6, 1975, p. 1; "Minute Maid Puts the Squeeze on Realemon," Advertising Age, October 13, 1975, p. 1; "Comparative Advertising: A Powerful Selling Tool When It Is Not Abused," Advertising Age, April 21, 1975, p. 58; P. M. Ginter and J. M. Starling, "Comparative Advertising: Environmental Regulatory and Effectiveness Issues," a paper presented at the Southwestern Marketing Association Conference, New Orleans, March 23-26, 1977, pp. 10-11.

comparative advertising, the performance reports from the marketplace, the knowledge gained from top advertising executives' first-hand experiences with comparative advertising, and other independent observations led to the formation of the following hypotheses:

- $H_1$ : Purchase rate of a low involving product will be higher through a comparative advertising strategy providing objective information than through a conventional advertising strategy before and after the consumer's attitude is measured.
- $H_2$ : Before purchase of a low involving product, there will be no significant difference in attitude toward the brand advertised through either a comparative or conventional advertising strategy.
- $H_3$ : After purchase of a low involving product, attitude toward the sponsor's brand (brand preference) is higher when the item is presented through a comparative advertising strategy than through a conventional advertising strategy.

To test these hypotheses an appropriate research design and procedures was used to gain maximum external

validity of the findings of this study. Such an effort will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to test the preceding hypotheses is discussed in this chapter in terms of the general research design, experimental setting, sample selection and size, treatment procedure, data collection instruments, and finally the statistical analysis procedures to be employed on the data obtained.

#### General Research Design

To examine the effects of comparative vs. conventional advertising on attitude, purchase, and post-purchase attitude, this study made use of a combination of time-series and cross-sectional designs. A time-series design enabled us to obtain data from the same sample for successive points in time.<sup>1</sup> Such a design was required under the tenets of the Purchase Priority model in order to make observations over time on the attitude dimension of this study.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul E. Green and Donald S. Tull, Research for Marketing Decisions, Third Edition (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), p. 83.

All previous studies on comparative advertising have only employed cross-sectional design, but as Mazis points out " . . . there is a definite need to evaluate the impact of various treatments over time in order to accurately assess attitudinal shifts."<sup>2</sup> Since more than one group of subjects were used in this study, combining cross-sectional design with time series enabled us to measure comparative advertising impact on one group versus conventional advertising impact on another group at the same point in time, after the groups have been exposed to experimental comparative and conventional advertisements, respectively.

This study consisted of two major phases. Altogether four experimental groups were used to measure both the attitude and purchase dimensions of the study.

Phase I: For Phase I, two groups of students were used to assess the differential effects of comparative

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M. B. Mazis, "A Theoretical and Empirical Examination of Comparative Advertising," an unpublished research paper, Department of Marketing, University of Florida, 1977, p. 29; A. G. Sawyer, "The Need to Measure Attitudes and Beliefs Over Time: The Case of Deceptive and Corrective Advertising," presented to American Marketing Association Educator's Conference, August 1976).



versus conventional advertising through the attitude construct of the Hierarchy-of-Effects model.

One group was used for the comparative ad treatment, and another group for the conventional ad treatment. The conventional ad treatment group also served as a control group.<sup>3</sup> After having been exposed to the experimental treatments, the subjects' attitude were scaled immediately as was done by previous studies under the Hierarchy-of-Effects model and then coupons were given to the subjects of both groups to redeem for the experimental products at the Southeastern Louisiana University Bookstore. Their coupon redemptions were counted in order to determine the purchase effectiveness.

In Phase I, the experimental treatments of the two groups of subjects were as is shown below:

Experimental Treatment	Test Units	Dependent Variable <sub>1</sub>	Dependent Variable <sub>2</sub>
Comparative Ad	Group 1	Attitude	Purchase
Conventional Ad	Group 2	Attitude	Purchase

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<sup>3</sup>Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, Experimental And Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1966), p. 27.

Phase II: In Phase II, two groups of subjects were used to determine the effectiveness of comparative versus conventional advertising through the purchase behavior under the assumption of the Purchase Priority model.

One group was exposed to a comparative ad and another group to a conventional ad. Then, instead of measuring the subjects' attitude, coupons were given for redemption. After a period of one week, their attitudes were surveyed toward the purchased products.

In Phase II the experimental treatment of the two groups of subjects were as is shown below:

Experimental Treatment	Test Units	Dependent Variable <sub>1</sub>	Dependent Variable <sub>2</sub>
Comparative Ad	Group 3	Purchase	Post-Purchase Attitude
Conventional Ad	Group 4	Purchase	Post-Purchase Attitude

### Experimental Design

Most studies on comparative advertising dealt with attitude change, and therefore, before-and-after

experimental designs were employed. Since this study focused on purchase behavior and post purchase attitude, a before-and-after design was deemed unnecessary for the following major reasons: first, it has a major weakness which is in testing effect (i.e., the second measurement may be influenced by the first measurement). "When people's attitudes, opinions, or preferences are used as dependent variables, however, the testing effect becomes more serious."<sup>4</sup> Thus it would bias the subjects; make them stick to their prior stated preferences. Additionally, after-only with control design eliminates interaction effect between pretesting and experimental variable which sensitizes the subjects to the issues involved in the experiment.<sup>5</sup>

Secondly, in the after-only with control design, the difference between alternative experimental treatments is measured, not the change in responses between

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<sup>4</sup>Keith K. Cox and Ben M. Enis, The Marketing Research Process (Pacific Palisades, Calif.: Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc.), 1972, p. 312.

<sup>5</sup>Robert W. Joselyn, Designing the Marketing Research Project (New York: Petrocelli/Charter, 1977), p. 75.

individuals exposed to the experimental variable.<sup>6</sup> As such, this study did not primarily involve change in preexisting attitudes which usually requires pretest results to compare them with post test results. Thus measurement relative to the ads was avoided before exposure so that respondents would not be sensitized to the purpose of the research as Michael Ray and his colleagues did in testing communication effectiveness and low involvement theory.<sup>7</sup> Besides, when product or promotional strategy preferences are measured before exposure, respondents may be committed to their initial evaluation and thus produce a bias in the internal validity of the study.

The after-only with control design was most suitable for the present study.<sup>8</sup> The use of the control group would alleviate the problem of brand loyalty. Campbell

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>7</sup>Michael L. Ray, "Marketing Communication and the Hierarchy-of-Effects," in New Models for Mass Communication Research, Vol. II, Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research, Peter Clark, ed. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1973), p. 156.

<sup>8</sup>F. E. Webster and F. von Pechmann, "A Replication of the 'Shopping List' Study," Journal of Marketing, Vol. 34, April, 1970, pp. 61-63.

and Stanley suggest after-only with control group as suitable experimental design for the comparison of those who, for example, saw a certain advertisement with those who did not, or with those who saw an alternative advertisement.<sup>9</sup> Thus many promotional tools can be effectively tested with this design.<sup>10</sup>

To control the brand loyal covariate, the procedure followed was randomization. In this way, we were able to achieve pre-experimental equation of groups and thus avoid spurious differences in the experimental subjects.<sup>11</sup>

Since the purpose of this experiment was to measure the differential effects of two types of advertising strategies on subjects' attitude, purchase, and post-purchase attitude, two different categories of ads

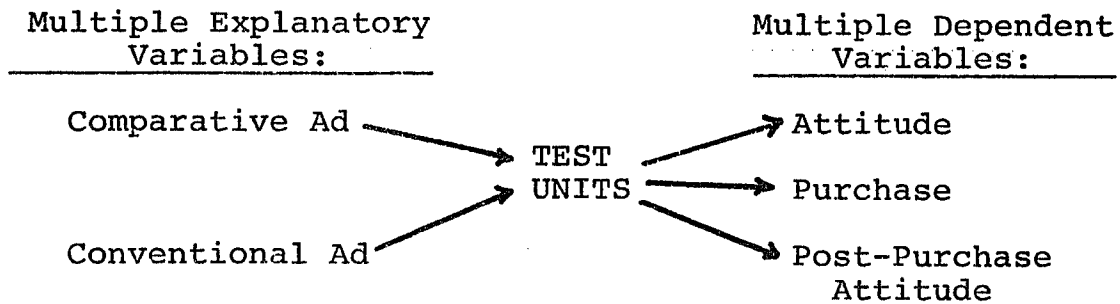
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<sup>9</sup>Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>10</sup>Harper W. Boyd, Jr. and Ralph Westfall, Marketing Research: Text & Cases (Homewood, Ill., Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1972), pp. 95-97.

<sup>11</sup>William L. Hays, Statistics (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), p. 449-500.

were presented to the test units as is shown in the following diagram:



The inclusion of the multiple dependent variables afforded a cumulative assessment of the dependent variables,<sup>12</sup> which was ignored by previous studies on comparative advertising.

Since independent variables were manipulated on the test units, and since the test units were randomly assigned for each treatment, this study met the major requirements of a true experimental design.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Jacob Jacoby and David B. Kyner, "Brand Loyalty vs. Repeat Purchasing Behavior," Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 10, February, 1973, pp. 1-9.

<sup>13</sup>F. Bush, Joseph F. Hair, Jr., Paul Busch, and Erick R. Pratt, "A Content Analysis and Critical Review of Methodological Issues in Consumer Behavior Research, 1964-1975," Working Paper Series No. 75-2, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Mississippi, November 1975, p. 19.

### Experimental Setting

Part of the experiment was conducted in the classroom and another part in the marketplace in order to control for internal validity in the controlled setting and also gain external validity from the natural setting of the marketplace. As the aim of the study was to measure the relative efficacy of alternative promotional strategies, the classroom was a good place to insure equal conditions to avoid favoring one alternative over the other.<sup>14</sup> In other words, treatments were administered under the same conditions which are usually better controlled in an experimental setting.

Increasing numbers of experiments confirm that buyer behavior under semi-artificial conditions resembles that in real life. One consumer behaviorist concludes his research report by stating that " . . . one fact which

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<sup>14</sup>William S. Hoofnagle, "Experimental Designs in Measuring the Effectiveness of Promotion," Journal of Marketing Research, May 1965, p. 155.

clearly has emerged is that experiments conducted within the semi-laboratory framework . . . are an effective means of investigating consumer behavior."<sup>15</sup>

The laboratory part of the experiment consisted of exposing the experimental groups to a portfolio of ads in various classrooms at Southeastern University, Hammond. After reading a cover story designed to disguise the nature and the purpose of the study and reading the ads, the subjects were asked to evaluate statements on the cover story in which there were also imbedded attitudinal questions regarding the experimental products. Then each subject was given a coupon for redemption at a 40 per cent discount of the retail price toward the purchase of one of the two experimental products, either Scripto or Paper Mate ballpoint pens. Each brand of pen was priced at 98 cents.

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<sup>15</sup>P. Charlton and A. S. C. Ehrenberg, "An Experiment in Brand Choice," Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XIII, May 1976, p. 152. See also, P. Charlton and B. Pymont, "Buyer Behavior Under Mini Test Conditions," Journal of Market Research Society, 14 (July 1972), 171-83; and P. Charlton and A. S. C. Ehrenberg, "McConnell's Experimental Brand Choice Data," Journal of Marketing Research, 10 (August 1973), 302-307.



As for the real world setting part of the experiment, the subjects were told to go to the Southeastern Louisiana University Bookstore and redeem the given coupons there. The experimental pens were displayed in separate boxes at the pen counter of the store.

Although the first setting for the experiment was called laboratory, in fact the classroom is real and not simulated except for the fact that students do not normally go there to read advertisements. Therefore, to hedge against possible reactive arrangement due to somewhat artificial setting which would bias results,<sup>16</sup> a cover story was used under the pretext of asking the subjects to participate in a study of one method of marketing (e.g., Direct Marketing to College Students) which is placed in Appendix I. In this way, student subjects were led to believe that they were chosen to read a feasibility study and give their opinions on it.

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<sup>16</sup>Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, op. cit., p. 20.

### Sample Selection and Size

A sample of undergraduate marketing students was selected from undergraduate marketing classes. A probability sample was not deemed necessary for the purpose of this explanatory study since the major objective here was to distinguish between treatment effects on randomly assigned test units,<sup>17</sup> while in inferential studies the main concern is with generalizing the finding to a population based on a probability sample.<sup>18</sup>

The size of the sample was 273 units since the statistical analysis was such that a larger one was not required. Statistical analysis is covered later in this chapter under a separate section.

The selected sample was divided randomly into four groups as is shown in Table 4.1. For Phase I of the study, one experimental group of 70 students was

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<sup>17</sup>Eugene S. Edgington, "Statistical Inference and Nonrandom Samples," Psychological Bulletin, 66 (1966), pp. 485-487.

<sup>18</sup>Ronald F. Bush, Joseph F. Hair, Jr., Paul Busch, and Eric R. Pratt, op. cit., p. 18.

Table 4.1  
Distribution Of Subjects To  
Different Treatments

	Phase I	Phase II
Comparative	70	72
Conventional	65	66

exposed to one comparative ad favoring Scripto, one conventional ad favoring Paper Mate, and two filler ads; and another experimental group of 65 students were exposed to one conventional ad favoring Scripto, one conventional ad favoring Paper Mate, and two filler ads. In Phase II, 72 students were exposed to the comparative portfolio ads which were the same ones used in Phase I. A group of 66 students were exposed to the conventional portfolio ads which were the same ones used in Phase I also. The two experimental groups of conventional ad treatments of both Phase I and Phase II also served as control groups since it is methodologically sound to use one of the treatments (in our case the conventional ad groups) as control group in the experimental design of after-only with control.

### Treatment Procedure

For Phase I of the study, the first experimental group was given a portfolio of ads containing one comparative ad, one conventional ad, and two filler ads which are placed in Appendix II. Preceding the ads in the portfolio, there was one page of cover story entitled "Direct Marketing to College Students". After having discussed the cover story and the subjects have had a chance to read the ads, a questionnaire was administered to measure the subjects' opinions on the cover story and their prepurchase attitudes towards the brands appearing in the portfolio ads. Then coupons were distributed.

The second group of Phase I of the study also received a portfolio of ads containing two experimental conventional ads and two filler ads, but there was not any comparative ad included as can be seen in Appendix I. After having read the cover story, the same attitudinal questionnaires were administered. Then coupons were distributed. Thus each group was exposed

to four ads. The reason for the same number of ads was to make the experimental conditions equal for both groups of subjects.<sup>19</sup>

For Phase II of the study, the first experimental group was treated to the same ads and cover story as used for group one in Phase I of the study, as shown in Appendix III. The only difference was in the last part of the experiment: prepurchase attitudinal questionnaires were not administered to the subjects; instead coupons were given right after exposure to the ads.

The second experimental group of Phase II was also treated to the same ads and cover story as used for group two in Phase I of the study, shown in Appendix IV. The only difference was in not measuring the attitudes of the subjects immediately after exposure to the ads; instead coupons were given.

The two groups in Phase II had their attitudes measured after one week time span. These two groups had a chance to interact with the products advertised

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<sup>19</sup>Seymour Banks, "Marketing Experiments," in Readings in Market Research, ed. by Keith K. Cox (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 90.

through both comparative and conventional ads. It should be pointed out that the postpurchase attitudes of the two groups in Phase I were also scaled after the same period of time elapsed between exposure to the ads and purchase of the experimental pens.

### Data Collection Instruments

To collect data on the purchase variable, coupon redemptions were noted for each brand. The effectiveness of the sales promotion tool in terms of coupon incentives for securing immediate trial purchasing has long been recognized in marketing.<sup>20</sup>

The coupon was good for redemption of either Scripto or Paper Mate pens. To eliminate any possible order effect, half of the coupons were printed with Scripto first and then Paper Mate, and the other half was printed vice versa. Appendix V contains samples of the coupon used in the experiment.

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<sup>20</sup>David A. Aaker and John G. Ayers, Advertising Management (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), pp. 130-131; James F. Engel, et al., Promotional Strategy (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1975) pp. 5, 506.

The clerk at the checkout counter was instructed to circle on the coupon the purchased brand. In this way, we avoided having some subjects redeem the coupons for both of the brands. To avoid having some subjects postpone redemption; the coupons were marked as good for the discount purchase for only seven days. These coupons entitled each subject a 40 per cent off toward the purchase of any of the two experimental products. Since comparative ad treatment groups and conventional ad treatment groups were given the same incentive (discount coupons) differences in effects obtained were not subject to an important exteraneous factor.

As for the other dependent variables, prepurchase attitude and postpurchase attitude data were collected on a seven-point scale since the alternative advertising strategy effectiveness pertain to product related effects (impact of different message formats on product liking, intentions to buy, or purchase.<sup>21</sup> A seven-point horizontal scale was deemed appropriate for measuring product preference levels.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>James F. Engel, et al., op. cit., p. 331.

<sup>22</sup>Jack Abrams, "An Evaluation of Alternative Rating Devices for Consumer Research," Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. III, May 1966, pp. 189-193.

For each of these dependent variables, the respondent was asked one question regarding his or her preference of brands. The research instrument used in prepurchase attitude scaling appear in Appendix VI. The procedure was to have the respondent convey his or her preference on a given topic by indicating one of seven positions on a scale of bipolar adjectives. These adjectives and antonyms, the extremes of each pair were separated by seven (assumed) equal intervals. For example, for brand preference a pair of adjectives "definitely dislike" and "definitely like" was presented. The respondent was asked to rate the brand along the scale as follows:

Definite Dislike

Definite Like

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-3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3

A numerical value was assigned to each position on the scale as is shown above. Such a numerical assignment made possible the calculation of means. Thus, the "average response" of the subjects could be found.



As for the postpurchase attitude measurement, again the foregoing 7-point scale was used. To evaluate the pens redeemed with the coupon, the subjects of the four experimental groups in Phase I and Phase II were instructed to check one of the three boxes which were designated Scripto, Paper Mate, or neither (in the event the subject did not redeem his coupon). The postpurchase attitude instrument is placed in Appendix VII.

### Statistical Analysis

For the types of analysis of the data collected for measuring purchase response effectiveness, a univariate method was used; a commonly used method of nominally scaled variables is chi-square, in which the relationship between a single dependent variable (sales) and a single independent variable (ad) is measured.

The statistical procedure used in evaluating the data obtained from the seven-point horizontal scale were put to analysis of variance in order to compare between

the means of the various attitudinal dimensions, and also be able to measure the main and interaction effects.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Donald S. Tull and Del I. Hawkins, Marketing Research: Meaning, Measurement, and Method (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), pp. 539-540.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The analysis of the collected data is presented in this chapter in two sections. The first section presents the general descriptive statistics generated from the experiment conducted in Phase I and Phase II of the study both on purchase and attitude dimensions. These data are analyzed statistically to determine the significance level between the relationship of the two promotional strategies and their respective effects on the subjects' prepurchase attitude, purchase behavior and postpurchase attitude.

#### Statistics Generated From The Experiment

The data gathered on the purchase dimension of the study in both Phase I and Phase II of the experiment are presented first and followed by the attitude data.

#### Purchase Dimension

Out of a population of 273 subjects (63.7 per cent), 174 redeemed their coupons toward the purchase of either

Scripto or Paper Mate pens. In Phase I of the experiment, of 70 subjects exposed to the comparative treatment, 37 purchased Scripto and 17 subjects purchased Paper Mate pens. In the conventional treatment group, of 65 subjects, 10 purchased Scripto pens and 25 subjects purchased Paper Mate pens as is shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1  
Distribution of Pens Purchased In Phase I Under  
Comparative and Conventional Strategies

Treatment	Scripto	Paper Mate
Comparative	37	17
Conventional	10	25
Total	47	42

In Phase II of the experiment, of 72 exposed to the comparative treatment, 47 subjects purchased Scripto pens and 8 purchased Paper Mate pens. As for the conventional treatment group, of 66 subjects, 13 purchased Scripto pens and 17 purchased Paper Mate pens as is shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2  
Distribution of Pens Purchased in Phase II Under  
Comparative and Conventional Strategies

Treatment	Scripto	Paper Mate
Comparative	47	8
Conventional	13	17
Total	60	25

Thus a total of 107 Scripto pens and 67 Paper Mate pens were purchased in both Phase I and Phase II combined.

Table 5.3  
Distribution of Pens Purchased Under Comparative  
and Conventional Strategy Treatments in  
Phase I and Phase II

Phase	Number of Subjects	Treatment	Pens Purchased Scripto	Paper Mate
I	70	Comparative	37	17
I	65	Conventional	10	25
II	72	Comparative	47	8
II	66	Conventional	13	17
TOTAL			107	67

### Attitude Dimension

In Phase I, 135 subjects participated in the experiment. The data on prepurchase attitude toward the experimental products, Scripto and Paper Mate, came from 90 subjects who purchased either Scripto or Paper Mate. The remaining 49 subjects' prepurchase attitude was not included since one of the objectives of the study was to determine if there was any difference in attitude after purchase. Thus, since each respondent was asked to evaluate both Scripto and Paper Mate, a total of 180 observations were collected ( $90 \times 2 = 180$ ). The number of observations by treatment and by pen are unequal due to unequal groups of subjects used for each treatment.

The mean ratings of respondents by treatment and by pen were calculated from the raw scores obtained from a 7-point scale, +3 being the highest (positive) and -3 being the lowest (negative). The mean scores calculated for the comparative and conventional treatment groups toward the experimental products are presented in Table 5.4.

As for the Phase I postpurchase attitude of the respondents who purchased either Scripto or Paper Mate, the total number of observations is only 90 since each subject

Table 5.4  
Mean Prepurchase Ratings Obtained  
On Pen by Type of Treatment

Observation	Treatment	Pen	Prepurchase Attitude Means
54	Comparative	Scripto	1.1296
54	Comparative	Paper Mate	0.9630
36	Conventional	Scripto	1.2500
36	Conventional	Paper Mate	1.3883

was instructed to evaluate only the brand of pen purchased. The mean scores of the ratings of the two experimental products both under comparative and conventional treatments appear in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5  
Mean Postpurchase Ratings Obtained  
On Pen by Type of Treatment

In Phase I			
Observation	Treatment	Pen	Postpurchase Attitude Means
37	Comparative	Scripto	2.2162
17	Comparative	Paper Mate	0.7059
12	Conventional	Scripto	2.0833
24	Conventional	Paper Mate	1.9583

In Phase II, 138 subjects participated in the experiment, but only 85 subjects purchased either Scripto or Paper Mate. Thus a total of 85 observations were tabulated. To follow the basic assumption of the Purchase Priority model, only postpurchase attitude of the respondents were scaled. It should be noted again that the postpurchase attitudes of the subjects who actually purchased either brand were included. The mean rating scores obtained for the comparative and conventional treatment groups toward the experimental products are presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6  
Mean Postpurchase Ratings Obtained  
On Pen By Type Of Treatment  
In Phase II

Observation	Treatment	Pen	Postpurchase Attitude Means
47	Comparative	Scripto	2.2553
8	Comparative	Paper Mate	0.8750
13	Conventional	Scripto	1.2857
17	Conventional	Paper Mate	1.3750

Now that the descriptive statistics have been presented, the following section is devoted to the statistical analysis



of the data in order to derive conclusions on the purchase and attitude dimensions of the study.

### Statistical Analysis of the Data

Since the first hypothesis of the study deals with the differential effects of comparative advertising versus conventional advertising on purchase behavior, analysis of the data collected on the purchase variable is first presented; then followed by the analysis of the data pertaining to the second and third hypotheses concerning the prepurchase and postpurchase attitudes toward the pens purchased.

#### Purchase Dimension

Since one of the objectives of the study was to test whether promotional strategies were associated with the two brands of pens, the observations from the experiment are cross-classified in a two-way classification as is shown in Table 5.7.

The variation of purchase rates among the four cells in Table 5.7 suggests that promotional strategies may be associated with the kind of brands purchased. Expressed in

Table 5.7  
Observed And Theoretical Frequencies--Comparative  
Versus Conventional Treatments And Their  
Respective Effects On Brand Purchase

	Scripto		Paper Mate		Total
Comparative	84	67	25	42	109
Conventional	23	40	42	25	65
	107		67		174

probability terms, are the quantity of each brand purchased independent of the type of the promotional strategy treatments? Analysis of the relationships between sales and promotional strategies by means of Chi-square is in order.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, since the nature of data collected is nominal, and since each cell of the matrix contains more than five observations, the application of Chi-square to the data

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<sup>1</sup>Robert K. Young and Donald J. Veldman, Introductory Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977) p. 391.

was deemed appropriate.<sup>2</sup> This statistical tool provides information regarding whether there is a significant interaction effect between treatments and types of pens.

The formula used for the computation is in the following equation form:<sup>3</sup>

$$x^2 = \sum_{1}^K \frac{(o - e)^2}{e}$$

Where  $x^2$  = Chi-square,  $K$  = number of categories or groups,  $o$  = observed frequency in a category, and  $e$  = expected frequency in a category. By inserting the data presented in Table 5.7 into this formula, the value of  $x^2$  was computed:

$$x^2 = \frac{(84-67)^2}{67} + \frac{(25-42)^2}{42} + \frac{(23-40)^2}{40} + \frac{(42-25)^2}{25} = 29.99$$

The calculated  $x^2 = 29.99$ , (1 d.f.,  $p < .001$ ). At a significance of .05 level, the tabular  $x^2$  value is 3.84,

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<sup>2</sup>Paul E. Green and Donald S. Tull, Research for Marketing Decisions (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975) pp. 353-355.

<sup>3</sup>Young and Veldman, op. cit., p. 387.

at .01 significance level, the tabular  $x^2$  value is 6.63, and even at .001 level, the tabular  $x^2$  value is 10.2. It should be noted that there is only 1 degree of freedom in a 2X2 table of Chi-square classification.<sup>4</sup>

Even though the computed value of  $x^2$  is far above the critical significance level, Yates' correction for continuity was applied to see if it changed the calculated value very much. Also, since we have a case of one degree of freedom, Yates' correction is recommended.<sup>5</sup>

$$x^2_{(c)} = \frac{(/84-67/-\frac{1}{2})^2}{67} + \frac{(/25-42/-\frac{1}{2})^2}{42} + \frac{(/23-40/-\frac{1}{2})^2}{40} + \frac{(/42-25/-\frac{1}{2})^2}{25} = 29.92$$

The computed value of  $x^2_{(c)}$  indicated that it would be quite safe to reject the hypothesis of independence between the treatments and the type of pens purchased. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study is statistically supported. That is, the purchase rate of a low involving product will be higher through a comparative advertising strategy providing objective information than through a

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 393.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 390.

conventional advertising strategy administered before and after the consumer's attitude is measured.

### Attitude Dimension

Analysis of variance was applied to the data on the attitude dimension of the study. This technique is considered useful in experimental designs where the researcher needs to control certain variables of interest (predictors) and measure their influence on some response (criterion) variable.<sup>6</sup> The purpose here is to analyze the variance between treatments and the comparisons of mean attitudes toward the pens. In this study, the two predictor variables are the two types of promotional strategies which are nominally scaled, and the criterion variables are the attitudinal response scores which are interally scaled.

The model used is analysis of variance with groups of unequal sizes. Since treatment groups were unequal in number, the analysis of variance was handled by the general linear regression with least-squares technique.<sup>8</sup> The

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<sup>6</sup>Green and Tull, op. cit., p. 329.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>8</sup>Walter R. Harvey, Least-Squares Analysis of Data With Unequal Subclass Numbers, United States Department of Agriculture, ARS-20-8, July 1960, pp. 157.

computer program was the GLM Procedure found in A User's Guide to SAS.

The computational results obtained on the data by means of ANOVA are presented in Table 5.8. Analysis of the data indicates that there is no statistical difference between treatments, namely comparative treatment has no greater effect on the subjects' attitude than conventional treatment. Furthermore, prepurchase attitude toward Scripto and Paper Mate is not significant at .05 level. Also the analysis indicates that there is no significant interaction effect between treatments by pen.

Table 5.8  
ANOVA of Prepurchase Attitude  
In Phase I

Source	DF	Mean Square	F Value
Treatment	1	1.5147	1.0326
Error <sub>a</sub>	59	1.4669	
Pen	1	0.0083	0.00781
Treatment X Pen	1	1.0083	0.94548
Error <sub>b</sub>	117	1.0660	

The mean attitudinal ratings obtained on type of treatment by pen figures below in Table 5.9. Since the attitude measurements were collected from a 7-point scale ranging from highest positive rating of 3 and lowest negative rating of -3, any mean rating between +1 to -1 is considered neutral or low. The computed F Value of 0.00781 (1, 86 d.f., p .05) is not significant in determining that there is attitudinal difference toward either pen.

Therefore,  $H_2$  is supported by the data. That is, before purchase of a low involving product, there is no significant difference in attitude toward the brand advertised through either a comparative or a conventional strategy.

Table 5.9  
Mean Ratings Obtained On Treatments  
By Pen In Phase I

Number of Subjects	Treatment	Pen	Prepurchase Attitude Means
54	Comparative	Scripto	1.1296
54	Comparative	Paper Mate	0.9630
36	Conventional	Scripto	1.2500
36	Conventional	Paper Mate	1.3883

As for the postpurchase attitude of subjects in Phase I, analysis of the data indicates that there is no significant difference between the treatments at .05 level. The treatment effect has an F Value of 2.509, (1,86 d.f.,  $p > .117$ ), as is shown in Table 5.10. Attitudes between the brands of pen are also insignificant. However, the analysis shows that there is a significant treatment by pen interaction with an F 9.117, 1,86 d.f.,  $p < .0033$ .

Table 5.10  
ANOVA Of Postpurchase Attitude  
In Phase I

Source	DF	Mean Square	F Value
Treatment	1	4.4957	2.509
Pen	1	0.00001	0.000005
Treatment X Pen	1	16.3374	9.117**
Error	86	154.08	

Review of the mean ratings obtained from the post-purchase attitude toward the pens purchased indicates that comparative treatment has greater effect on Scripto than conventional treatment has on either Scripto or Paper Mate as is shown in Table 5.11.



Table 5.11  
The Mean Ratings Obtained On Type Of  
Treatment By Pen In Phase I

Number of Subjects	Treatment	Pen	Postpurchase Attitude Means
37	Comparative	Scripto	2.2162
17	Comparative	Paper Mate	0.7059
12	Conventional	Scripto	2.0833
24	Conventional	Paper Mate	1.9583

The mean rating for the comparative group is 2.2162 toward Scripto, while in the conventional group the mean rating is 2.0833. Although the difference seems to be small, it was statistically significant--the F Value obtained for treatment X pen is 9.117, with 1 and 86 d.f.,  $p < F$  0.0033. It should also be noted that the mean rating for the comparative group is 0.7059 toward Paper Mate, whereas in the conventional group the mean score is 1.9583. The fact that Paper Mate received a lower rating by the comparative group than by the conventional group lends additional support that the presence of the comparative ad favoring Scripto must have significantly affected Paper Mate's position. In other words, Paper Mate was overshadowed by Scripto's comparative ad. The argument above

might imply that only "the sample means are different; we can determine that fact by inspection. Our inferences are always about populations from which the samples were drawn."<sup>9</sup>

Thus  $H_3$  is supported by the data obtained in Phase I that after purchase of a low-involving product, attitude toward the sponsor's brand (brand preference) is higher when the item is presented through a comparative advertising strategy than through a conventional strategy.

The analysis of variance technique with experimental groups of unequal sizes was also applied to the post-purchase attitude scores obtained in Phase II. The results are reported in Table 5.12.

The computed F Value of 0.0047 (1 d.f.,  $p > F$  0.9454) indicates that there is no significant difference between comparative and conventional treatments on the subjects' postpurchase attitude toward the pen purchased in the study. The analysis further discloses that the interaction effect between Phases I and II, and type of treatments is insignificant; so is the interaction effect between type of treatment by pen, and phase by pen.

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<sup>9</sup>Young and Veldman, op. cit., p. 327.

**Table 5.12**  
**ANOVA Of Prepurchase Attitude In Phase I**  
**And Postpurchase Attitude In Phase II**

Source	DF	Mean Square	F Value
Phase	1	0.2291	0.1656
Treatment	1	0.0049	0.0047
Phase X Treatment	1	1.8596	1.3442
Pen	1	5.1540	3.7256
Treatment X Pen	1	2.4178	1.7478
Phase X Pen	1	2.0234	1.4627
Phase X Treatment X Pen	1	1.8037	1.3038
Error	167	1.3834	

The difference between prepurchase attitudes in Phase I and the post purchase attitudes in Phase II under both types of treatments are also found to be statistically insignificant. However, there is a difference in attitude toward the two types of pens purchased with an F Value of 3.7256 (1 d.f.) but at a low level significance of .055. This points to the phenomenon that there seems to be a

trend of higher means obtained on comparative treatment by Scripto pen in both Phases I and II as can be detected in Table 5.13.

Table 5.13  
Prepurchase and Postpurchase Means  
Obtained On Comparative Treatment  
In Phases I & II

Observation	Treatment	Phase	Pen	Pre-purchase Attitude	Post-purchase Attitude
54	Comparative	I	Scripto	1.1296	
37	Comparative	I	Scripto		2.2162
47	Comparative	II	Scripto		2.553

By observing the trend of means in Table 5.13, we can see that the prepurchase mean toward Scripto by comparative treatment is 1.1296 in Phase I; then it moved to a higher postpurchase mean value of 2.2162 in the same Phase, and finally, in Phase II it moved to a postpurchase mean value of 2.553.

In contrast, the trend of means of Paper Mate moved from smaller values under comparative treatments to larger

means under conventional treatments as is shown in Table 5.14, which combines the means obtained on Paper Mate in Phases I and II.

Table 5.14  
Prepurchase And Postpurchase Means Obtained  
On Paper Mate In Phases I And II

Observation	Treatment	Phase	Pen	Pre-purchase Attitude	Post-purchase Attitude
54	Comparative	I	Paper Mate	0.9630	
36	Conventional	I	Paper Mate	1.3883	
17	Comparative	I	Paper Mate		0.7059
24	Conventional	I	Paper Mate		1.9583
8	Comparative	II	Paper Mate		0.8750
17	Conventional	II	Paper Mate		1.3750

The trend of larger means obtained on Paper Mate under conventional treatments are due to the absence of the comparative ad favoring Scripto. The larger means may also indicate brand loyalty toward Paper Mate.

### Summary of the Data Analysis

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide the results of the statistical analysis of the research data. The first section provided the statistical description of the sample. The second section presented the statistical analysis of the data obtained in the experiment.

In review, the following hypotheses were tested for statistically significant differences:

$H_1$ : Purchase rate of a low involving product will be higher through a comparative advertising strategy providing objective information than through a conventional advertising strategy before and after the consumer's attitude is measured.

Chi-square analysis was applied to the purchase rates of the experimental products obtained under comparative and conventional promotional strategies. The analysis of the data indicated that there was significant dependence between the promotional strategies and the types of pens purchased. The above hypothesis was accepted since the purchase rate of Scripto pen was higher under comparative treatment than it was under the conventional treatment.

H<sub>2</sub>: Before purchase of a low involving product, there will be no significant difference in attitude toward the brand advertised through either a comparative or conventional advertising strategy.

Analysis of variance was run on the data obtained in Phase I of the study. The results indicated that there was no significant difference in prepurchase attitude of both comparative and conventional groups toward the experimental products. Consequently, the above hypothesis was supported by the data.

H<sub>3</sub>: After purchase of a low involving product, attitude toward the sponsor's brand (brand preference) is higher when the item is presented through a comparative advertising strategy than through a conventional advertising strategy.

Results obtained from analysis of variance on the post-purchase attitude of subjects in Phase I indicated that there was significant difference of attitude toward the experimental products by type of treatment. The difference was in favor of Scripto promoted through the comparative strategy. Thus, H<sub>3</sub> was also accepted.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research study presented in this dissertation may be broadly classified into marketing communication effectiveness and consumer behavior area. In this context, this research represents one of several studies which have attempted to explore the effect of comparative advertising strategy on consumers' attitude; but, unlike the other studies, it also focused on consumers' purchase behavior.

In this chapter, first a summary of the research study is presented, then conclusions/implications are drawn based on the findings, and finally several suggestions are tendered for future research directions.

#### Summary

In an attempt to substantiate the need for this study, it was first necessary to review the literature on comparative advertising. It was discovered that previous research



on comparative advertising effectiveness have been onesided in the sense that the efficacy of this type of marketing communication was solely measured through the attitude construct of the respondent. The rationale was that the consumer moved sequentially through awareness to attitude, and in turn to behavior (purchase) in the manner held by the tenets of the Hierarchy-of-Effects model.

Based on this model, these studies concluded that comparative advertising has no greater, or even less effect than its counterpart conventional advertising format. It was also pointed out that these studies almost invariably used low-involving products in their laboratory experiments.

Since a considerable number of findings from attitude research indicate that attitude is not reflective of actual behavior in the marketplace, and since also recent studies in marketing communications using Low-Involvement Theory have found that the consumer tends to move from awareness directly to purchase of the advertised product and then to attitude about the product, a research gap was identified. This research gap necessitated the need to explore comparative advertising effectiveness from the purchase dimension.

To fill this gap, the objective of this study was twofold: first, to introduce to marketing researchers a

previously unexplored paradigm in conjunction with examining the impact of comparative advertising on consumptive behavior in the marketplace. Drawing from the conceptualization of Michael Ray's Low-Involvement Theory and Lavidge and Steiner's Hierarchy-of-Effects, the paradigm introduced was called the Purchase Priority model. This model was designed to account for low involvement purchase situations whereby the attitude construct is bypassed and the consumer recursively moves from awareness to purchase, and then to attitude. The second objective was to utilize this theoretical model to identify significant relationships between attitude and behavior by first measuring attitude and then behavior under the Hierarchy-of-Effects assumption, and finally by measuring first behavior and then attitude under the Purchase Priority model after exposing the subjects to an ad.

Thus, three major working hypotheses were formulated for finding answers to such research questions as:

1. Will purchase rate of a low involving product be higher through a comparative advertising strategy providing objective information than through a conventional advertising strategy before and after the consumer's attitude is measured?

2. Before purchase of a low involving product, will there be any significant difference in attitude toward the brand advertised through either a comparative or conventional advertising strategy?
3. After purchase of a low involving product, will the attitude toward the sponsor's brand be higher when the item is presented through a comparative advertising strategy instead of through a conventional advertising strategy?

To explore the differential effects of comparative advertising from consumer's prepurchase attitude, purchase, and postpurchase attitude perspectives, the present study was conducted in two phases: Phase I consisted of measuring effectiveness through the attitude construct by first measuring prepurchase attitude, purchase, and then postpurchase attitude; Phase II measured effectiveness through the Purchase Priority model by measuring first purchase and then postpurchase attitude.

A total of 273 undergraduate marketing students was randomly split into two groups of 135 and 138 subjects. These groups were used in Phase I and II, respectively.

In Phase I, a group of 70 subjects were given a portfolio containing a cover story, one comparative ad favoring Scripto, one conventional ad favoring Paper Mate, and three filler ads. Sixty five subjects were given a portfolio consisting of the same cover story, the same conventional ad favoring Paper Mate, the same two filler ads, but instead of a comparative ad, a conventional ad was included favoring Scripto.

After exposure to the portfolios, attitude questionnaires were administered for brand preference, and then coupons were distributed for redemption of either brand of pens. Ten days after the first treatment, subjects were asked to evaluate the brand of pen they purchased. Out of 135 respondents consisting of the comparative and conventional groups, 47 bought Scripto and 42 bought Paper Mate.

In Phase II, a group of 72 subjects were exposed to the comparative portfolio treatment, 66 were exposed to conventional treatment. After exposure, no attitudinal questionnaires were administered. Instead, coupons were distributed right after the subjects finished reading the ads. Like in Phase I, after 10 days, subjects were asked to evaluate the brand of pens they purchased. Out of 138 subjects, 60 bought Scripto and 25 bought Paper Mate.

Data on the purchase dimension of the study was analyzed via Chi-square and Yates' Continuity for Correction. The difference between comparative and conventional advertising treatments and their respective effectiveness on the purchase of the experimental brands was found statistically significant at  $p \leq .001$ , 1 d.f. The results supported  $H_1$  that comparative advertising has greater effect on the purchase of the sponsor's brand than conventional advertising.

Data on the attitude dimension was collected from the subjects' evaluation of the experimental products on a 7-point scale, +3 being the highest, and -3 being the lowest.

In Phase I, 90 subjects were asked to evaluate both brands before purchase and then after 10 days from the distribution of the coupons, subjects were asked to evaluate only the pen they bought. It should be noted that in Phase II questionnaires were not administered on the subjects' prepurchase attitudes. ANOVA was applied on the obtained observations. There was no statistical difference at .05 level between the comparative group and the conventional groups toward the experimental products ( $F$  0.00781, 1, 86 d.f.,  $p$  .05). Thus  $H_2$  was supported in the sense that there was no significant difference in prepurchase attitudes toward both experimental products.

As for the postpurchase attitude of subjects in Phase I, analysis of the data by means of ANOVA indicated that there was a significant treatment by pen interaction ( $F 9.117$ , with  $1,86$  d.f.,  $p < .0033$ ); the comparative group showed a high positive attitude toward Scripto. Thus  $H_3$  was supported by the data obtained from Phase I.

Finally, analysis of the data on the postpurchase attitude in Phase II showed that there was significant difference between comparative and conventional treatments at .055 level ( $F 3.7256$ ,  $1$  d.f.). Thus  $H_3$  was strongly supported by the data obtained in Phase I, but somewhat weakly supported by the data generated from Phase II.

### Conclusions/Implications

The implications of the study for the marketing manager should be considered somewhat tentative for the findings are from one experiment that measured directly comparative advertising effect on purchase.

It should also be pointed out that the product class used in the experiment was one frequently bought by the students and thus it was of interest to them. Therefore,

it behooves anyone not to generalize from just one study such as this one. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that this kind of experiment is not generalizable since it was an explanatory study not an inferential study based on a probability sample.

With the foregoing limitations in mind, several conclusions and implications can be drawn from the findings. These conclusions pertain to the experimental subjects used in this study only.

The first conclusion is that a comparative advertising which provides the consumer with objective information about the product has greater effect on his/her purchase behavior than a conventional advertising strategy would have. This conclusion contradicts previous studies on comparative advertising which implied that comparative advertising was not any more, or even less, effective than conventional advertising on consumers purchase behavior as reflected from their respondents' attitudes and intentions to buy.

Finding comparative advertising to be effective on purchase behavior in this study is consistent with the nature of the present-day consumer who is more educated

than his or her counterpart of some decades ago. Hence, s/he has become a more discriminating buyer. The implication to the marketing manager is that he should strive to provide the consumer with objective rather than subjective information. Due to inflation and its attendant negative effect on consumers' buying power, the consumer wants to get a fair return on each dollar spent. Therefore, any comparison based on objective attributes which appeal to consumers' rational motives, such as lower price, higher quality, and longer durability, etc., creates an interest in the consumer to try the product which has discriminating attributes over its competitors.

Recent studies are also indicating that it would be possible to change what consumers know and believe about products by means of objective product information. Moreover, consumers' yearning for novelty, their desire to try the unknown, new things, and ideas is fundamental to human nature. To ignore the power of novelty as a source of satisfaction is surely wrong. Comparative advertising is a convenient source to provide the consumer with easy and inexpensive information about the discriminating attributes of a product, and thus, this new promotional strategy is superior to non-comparative (conventional) advertising strategy.



The second conclusion is that comparative advertising should be based on a few easily discernable and salient attributes, especially when the advertised item is a low-involving product. The inclusion of too many attributes in an ad about an unimportant product which has low economic and psychological risk in purchasing it would tend to confuse the consumer or it would miss the consumer's attention. This conclusion is consistent with the information overload theory findings that there is a limit on consumer's ability to process information. Beyond a certain point information overload sets in and the consumer becomes either confused or disinterested in the message about the product.

Recent studies on advertising strategies for low-involving products advocate strategies to create salience value based on few attributes rather than based on complicated details on various aspects of the product. In other words, simplified information would enable the consumer to more accurately identify the objectively best brand. The implication to the practitioner is that comparative advertising should be geared to the level of involvement of the consumer with the product and that the inclusion of too many attribute comparisons would be ineffectual.

The third conclusion is that prepurchase attitude toward the sponsor's as well as competing brands are low when such advertising strategies are designed in low-involving product situations. Thus prepurchase attitude does not adequately serve as a measuring criterion for effectiveness on sales. The implication to the marketing manager is that pretesting of message effectiveness through the attitude construct may not be an accurate way to determine the efficacy of the advertising's communication and purchase effectiveness in a low-involving purchase situation. This study indicated that the consumer forms an attitude after purchase of a low-involving product.

Pretesting of message effectiveness, thus, would be reliable through testing the message in the marketplace to see how much pull effect it has on purchase. Such an objective can be accomplished by running an experiment under real market conditions to see how the consumer would overtly react (buy or not buy the product advertised).

The fourth conclusion is that postpurchase attitude of the consumer would be high as compared to prepurchase attitude toward a low-involving product under comparative advertising strategy than under its conventional counterpart. The implication to the marketing manager is that

postpurchase attitude would serve better as an indicator of how favorably or unfavorably the product is regarded by the consumer. Before purchase, the consumer would have little knowledge and experience about the product in light of the inclusion of new attributes in the product as advertised through a comparative or conventional advertising strategy. However, after purchase of the advertised product, he or she would have an opportunity to interact with the product. Out of this interaction, an attitude is formed, favorable if the product lives up to its claims, unfavorable if the attributes were not real. Thus, it would be more reliable to tap consumers' postpurchase attitude rather than the prepurchase attitude in determining advertising effectiveness.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

To extend the scope of the research on comparative advertising, several suggestions are provided in this section. The present study administered only a single exposure of the subjects to the experimental advertisements. It would be highly desirable to investigate whether the results obtained also hold true under repetitive exposure conditions. After reviewing the literature on the effects of repetition in advertising, Alan Sawyer

maintains that the amount of exposures of an individual to a stimulus can affect his or her knowledge of, liking for, and behavior toward that object.<sup>1</sup>

Another area that needs additional research is how comparative advertising differs in effectiveness across various media such as print vs. broadcast. In the light of new brain research findings, Herbert Krugman reported recently that there is a "difference between low-involvement, non-verbal learning which is produced by television viewing and the high-involvement learning which takes place as a result of reading printed matter."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, there may be a considerable difference of message learning and recall when the advertisement is transmitted through television or print media.

It may very well be that comparative advertising is a weak weapon for institutional (prestige) advertising, but chances are that it is an effective tool for promotional (sales) advertising. The consumer may construe

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<sup>1</sup>Alan G. Sawyer, "The Effects of Repetition," in Buyer/Consumer Information Processing, edited by G. David Hughes and Michael L. Ray (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1974), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert Krugman, "New Studies of Brain Functioning Show Need for Marketing Strategy Revisions," Marketing News, March 25, 1977, Vol. X, No. 18, p. 1.

institutional advertising as "blowing your own trumpet," a cause to which it might be attributed is the desire of the advertiser to create a good image of his company, as findings from Attribution Theory research indicate. Accordingly, the consumer may resist change of attitude for there is no benefit from the information obtained from the ad. On the other hand, even if s/he dislikes the source (company), and in the event the product excels the brand s/he usually buys, out of his or her own interest s/he purchases it.

The present study used only one product class. Research is also needed on different categories of low-involving products. In this area, research should focus on measuring comparative advertising effectiveness through the consumer's purchase behavior rather than simply through his attitude toward it.

Another important research question to be answered is whether or not comparative advertising strategy is also effective in the sale of high-involving products where the consumer tends to form a strong prepurchase attitude before buying an expensive or complex product, such as a movie camera or a stereo system. Although not difficult, but costly, further research is needed to

include both low-involving and high-involving products to see if respondents' prepurchase and postpurchase attitudes differ markedly across these two categories of products.

An inquiry is also needed to see whether or not comparative advertising is more effective for the promotion of a new product than for an established one. The new product may elicit curiosity, need for novelty, etc. in the consumer and thus make him/her purchase it.

Finally, to depart from the usual, easy and speculative methods of measuring comparative advertising effectiveness through the consumer's attitude, further field experiments are needed to determine its overall effectiveness on purchase behavior. After all, the ultimate success of the marketing manager depends on profitable sales which is highly congruent with corporate survival and growth objectives.

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## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Direct Marketing to College Students**

## APPENDIX I

Appendix I contains the cover story entitled "Direct Marketing to College Students." This cover story was administered to all the experimental subjects both in Phase I and II in order to disguise the intent of the study.

## DIRECT MARKETING TO COLLEGE STUDENTS:

## A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Unfavorable forces in the U.S. economy have made it financially and economically difficult for the average student to work his way through college and make ends meet. Needless to say, these disturbing forces are labeled as spiraling double digit inflation, rampant recession, and dwindling total national productivity. As a consequence, the trend in enrollment has been drastically decreasing around the nation at four year colleges up to terminal degree universities.

Due to these developments in the economy, top executives of some socially responsible corporations met during an intercompany conference and came up with the idea that they have to help the college student during these hard times for the country's strength and growth depend on the level of education of its people. These corporations proposed direct marketing of educational supplies to college students.

Direct marketing would eliminate the middleman who usually gets a hunk of the retail price of the product. In other words, the student will be able to save from 30 to 50 per cent on school supplies such as stationary, typewriters, pens, pencils, note books, etc. In this way, the elimination of the middleman's markup makes lower prices on college supplies possible.

In sum, these corporations want to see if students would favorably respond to direct marketing in order to save them money and encourage them to pursue their higher education. To implement such an idea, there are some questions regarding the procedures involved in processing orders:

1. How can the company safeguard against students ordering supplies not only for personal use but also for relatives and friends?

2. Frequency and sizes of orders have great effect on price. How to find the least expensive way for both the student and the company to implement direct marketing efficiently?

Note: In appreciation of your taking time to come here in order to evaluate such a marketing method to help the student, two companies offered discount coupons to be distributed toward the purchase of their products. Since these companies are direct competitors, we felt their ads would help you to make the right choice.

**APPENDIX II**

**The Comparative Treatment Portfolio**

**Of Ads Used In Phase I**

## APPENDIX II

This appendix contains the comparative treatment portfolio. Included in this portfolio are the cover story entitled "Direct Marketing to College Students," one comparative ad favoring Scripto over Paper Mate, one conventional ad favoring Paper Mate, and two filler ads (one about Random House Dictionary and the other about American Collegiate Dictionary).

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Note: In appreciation of your taking time to come here in order to evaluate such a marketing method to help the student, two companies offered discount coupons to be distributed toward the purchase of their products. Since these companies are direct competitors, we felt their ads would help you to make the right choice.

## SCRIPTO -- The Most Potent "Action" Ball Point Pen!

At home, in the office, or in the classroom you need a quality pen at an economical price. Scripto does it all. Compare our ball-point pen Scripto with Paper Mate, the leading brand. Scripto does not cost any more than this quality brand. In fact, both retail at 98¢, both have vivid ink, both are retractable and refillable, but Scripto excells Paper Mate in two major ways:

1. Scripto has a hard, rough textured carbide ball which writes on any surface and won't skip under any circumstances, while Paper Mate has a nylon point which wears out quickly.

2. It is Scripto's durable ball tip which makes possible an even flow of ink and thus outwrites Paper Mate by about 9,120 feet, or 1-1/2 miles, at 40 mph ball rotation.

Scripto's advantages help the consumer who wants these days to get the most from his shrinking dollar. Try a Scripto today and you be the judge!

## PAPER MATE

Here is the Paper Mate ball pen that will pamper your fingers at an economical price!

Some of its features include:

1. It has a nylon tip designed for writing smoothly and with less effort.
2. It is designed attractively to look like an expensive pen.
3. It has a constant flow of ink which avoids skipping and gooping.
4. It has an economical price tag -- 98¢.

You owe it to yourself to pamper your fingers -- Try Paper Mate today!

Random House American College Dictionary cuts short on your search time. Here is how:

- Has a complete thumb index
- Definitions are arranged with the most common American meaning first followed by older meanings
- Has over 1,500 illustrations
- It will be constantly revised so that it is always up-to-date

Comes in blue Bucksam binding, stamped in gold which would also make an attractive gift.

Suggested Retail: \$6.95

Webster's New Ideal Dictionary is a must for a writing companion.

The popular-priced dictionary presents the following outstanding features:

- Broad vocabulary selection to meet the needs of the user in his daily reading and writing
- Special sections containing foreign words and phrases
- Weights and measures
- Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States
- Numerous clear illustrations
- All in large clear type

All these great features for only \$4.95.

### APPENDIX III

#### The Conventional Treatment Portfolio Of Ads Used In Phase I

### APPENDIX III

This appendix contains the conventional portfolio which consists of the same cover story as used for the comparative group to decoy the subjects from guessing the purpose of the study. It also contains one conventional ad favoring Scripto, one conventional ad favoring Paper Mate (the same ad which was used for Paper Mate in the comparative treatment group), and the same filler ads about the two brands of dictionaries as used for the comparative treatment.

## DIRECT MARKETING TO COLLEGE STUDENTS:

### A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Unfavorable forces in the U.S. economy have made it financially and economically difficult for the average student to work his way through college and make ends meet. Needless to say, these disturbing forces are labeled as spiraling double digit inflation, rampant recession, and dwindling total national productivity. As a consequence, the trend in enrollment has been drastically decreasing around the nation at four year colleges up to terminal degree universities.

Due to these developments in the economy, top executives of some socially responsible corporations met during an intercompany conference and came up with the idea that they have to help the college student during these hard times for the country's strength and growth depend on the level of education of its people. These corporations proposed direct marketing of educational supplies to college students.

Direct marketing would eliminate the middleman who usually gets a hunk of the retail price of the product. In other words, the student will be able to save from 30 to 50 per cent on school supplies such as stationary, typewriters, pens, pencils, note books, etc. In this way, the elimination of the middleman's markup makes lower prices on college supplies possible.

In sum, these corporations want to see if students would favorably respond to direct marketing in order to save them money and encourage them to pursue their higher education. To implement such an idea, there are some questions regarding the procedures involved in processing orders:

1. How can the company safeguard against students ordering supplies not only for personal use but also for relatives and friends?

2. Frequency and sizes of orders have great effect on price. How to find the least expensive way for both the student and the company to implement direct marketing efficiently?



Note: In appreciation of your taking time to come here in order to evaluate such a marketing method to help the student, two companies offered discount coupons to be distributed toward the purchase of their products. Since these companies are direct competitors, we felt their ads would help you to make the right choice.

## SCRIPTO

At home, in the office, or in the classroom you need a quality pen at an economical price. Scripto does it all.

Here is how:

1. It has a hard textured carbide point for long smooth performance.
2. It does not skip under any circumstances.
3. It is retractable and refillable.
4. It is economically priced at .98¢
5. It has a longer writeout than any leading pen in the market.

Scripto -- delivers quality writing at considerable savings.

## PAPER MATE

Here is the Paper Mate ball pen that will pamper your fingers at an economical price!

Some of its features include:

1. It has a nylon tip designed for writing smoothly and with less effort.
2. It is designed attractively to look like an expensive pen.
3. It has a constant flow of ink which avoids skipping and gooping.
4. It has an economical price tag -- 98¢.

You owe it to yourself to pamper your fingers -- Try Paper Mate today!

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- Has a complete thumb index
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- Has over 1,500 illustrations
- It will be constantly revised so that it is always up-to-date

Comes in blue Bucksam binding, stamped in gold which would also make an attractive gift.

Suggested Retail: \$6.95

#### **APPENDIX IV**

**The Comparative Treatment Portfolio**

**Of Ads Used In Phase II**

#### APPENDIX IV

This portfolio presented to the comparative treatment group in Phase II consists of the same cover story, the same two experimental ads, and the same two filler ads used for the comparative treatment group in Phase I (See also Appendix II).

## DIRECT MARKETING TO COLLEGE STUDENTS:

### A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Unfavorable forces in the U.S. economy have made it financially and economically difficult for the average student to work his way through college and make ends meet. Needless to say, these disturbing forces are labeled as spiraling double digit inflation, rampant recession, and dwindling total national productivity. As a consequence, the trend in enrollment has been drastically decreasing around the nation at four year colleges up to terminal degree universities.

Due to these developments in the economy, top executives of some socially responsible corporations met during an intercompany conference and came up with the idea that they have to help the college student during these hard times for the country's strength and growth depend on the level of education of its people. These corporations proposed direct marketing of educational supplies to college students.

Direct marketing would eliminate the middleman who usually gets a hunk of the retail price of the product. In other words, the student will be able to save from 30 to 50 per cent on school supplies such as stationary, typewriters, pens, pencils, note books, etc. In this way, the elimination of the middleman's markup makes lower prices on college supplies possible.

In sum, these corporations want to see if students would favorably respond to direct marketing in order to save them money and encourage them to pursue their higher education. To implement such an idea, there are some questions regarding the procedures involved in processing orders:

1. How can the company safeguard against students ordering supplies not only for personal use but also for relatives and friends?

2. Frequency and sizes of orders have great effect on price. How to find the least expensive way for both the student and the company to implement direct marketing efficiently?



Note: In appreciation of your taking time to come here in order to evaluate such a marketing method to help the student, two companies offered discount coupons to be distributed toward the purchase of their products. Since these companies are direct competitors, we felt their ads would help you to make the right choice.

## SCRIPTO -- The Most Potent "Action" Ball Point Pen!

At home, in the office, or in the classroom you need a quality pen at an economical price. Scripto does it all. Compare our ball-point pen Scripto with Paper Mate, the leading brand. Scripto does not cost any more than this quality brand. In fact, both retail at 98¢, both have vivid ink, both are retractable and refillable, but Scripto excells Paper Mate in two major ways:

1. Scripto has a hard, rough textured carbide ball which writes on any surface and won't skip under any circumstances, while Paper Mate has a nylon point which wears out quickly.

2. It is Scripto's durable ball tip which makes possible an even flow of ink and thus outwrites Paper mate by about 9,120 feet, or 1-1/2 miles, at 40 mph ball rotation.

Scripto's advantages help the consumer who wants these days to get the most from his shrinking dollar. Try a Scripto today and you be the judge!

## PAPER MATE

Here is the Paper Mate ball pen that will pamper your fingers at an economical price!

Some of its features include:

1. It has a nylon tip designed for writing smoothly and with less effort.
2. It is designed attractively to look like an expensive pen.
3. It has a constant flow of ink which avoids skipping and gooping.
4. It has an economical price tag -- 98¢.

Random House American College Dictionary cuts short on your search time. Here is how:

- Has a complete thumb index
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- 350 recognized authorities worked directly on this book
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Comes in blue Bucksam binding, stamped in gold which would also make an attractive gift.

Suggested Retail: \$6.95

Webster's New Ideal Dictionary is a must for a writing companion.

The popular-priced dictionary presents the following outstanding features:

- Broad vocabulary selection to meet the needs of the user in his daily reading and writing
- Special sections containing foreign words and phrases
- Weights and measures
- Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States
- Numerous clear illustrations
- All in large clear type

All these great features for only \$4.95.

**APPENDIX V**

**The Conventional Treatment Portfolio**

**Of Ads Used In Phase II**

## APPENDIX V

Included in this appendix is the portfolio of ads given to the conventional treatment group in Phase II. This portfolio contains the same cover story, the same two experimental conventional ads, and the same two filler ads which were used for the conventional treatment group in Phase I (See also Appendix III).

## DIRECT MARKETING TO COLLEGE STUDENTS:

### A FEASIBILITY STUDY

Unfavorable forces in the U.S. economy have made it financially and economically difficult for the average student to work his way through college and make ends meet. Needless to say, these disturbing forces are labeled as spiraling double digit inflation, rampant recession, and dwindling total national productivity. As a consequence, the trend in enrollment has been drastically decreasing around the nation at four year colleges up to terminal degree universities.

Due to these developments in the economy, top executives of some socially responsible corporations met during an intercompany conference and came up with the idea that they have to help the college student during these hard times for the country's strength and growth depend on the level of education of its people. These corporations proposed direct marketing of educational supplies to college students.

Direct marketing would eliminate the middleman who usually gets a hunk of the retail price of the product. In other words, the student will be able to save from 30 to 50 per cent on school supplies such as stationary, typewriters, pens, pencils, note books, etc. In this way, the elimination of the middleman's markup makes lower prices on college supplies possible.

In sum, these corporations want to see if students would favorably respond to direct marketing in order to save them money and encourage them to pursue their higher education. To implement such an idea, there are some questions regarding the procedures involved in processing orders:

1. How can the company safeguard against students ordering supplies not only for personal use but also for relatives and friends?

2. Frequency and sizes of orders have great effect on price. How to find the least expensive way for both the student and the company to implement direct marketing efficiently?



Note: In appreciation of your taking time to come here in order to evaluate such a marketing method to help the student, two companies offered discount coupons to be distributed toward the purchase of their products. Since these companies are direct competitors, we felt their ads would help you to make the right choice.

## SCRIPTO

At home, in the office, or in the classroom you need a quality pen at an economical price. Scripto does it all.

Here is how:

1. It has a hard textured carbide point for long smooth performance.
2. It does not skip under any circumstances.
3. It is retractable and refillable.
4. It is economically priced at 98¢.
5. It has a longer writeout than any leading pen in the market.

Scripto -- delivers quality writing at considerable savings.

## PAPER MATE

Here is the Paper Mate ball pen that will pamper your fingers at an economical price!

Some of its features include:

1. It has a nylon tip designed for writing smoothly and with less effort.
2. It is designed attractively to look like an expensive pen.
3. It has a constant flow of ink which avoids skipping and gooping.
4. It has an economical price tag -- 98¢.

You owe it to yourself to pamper your fingers -- Try Paper Mate today!

Webster's New Ideal Dictionary is a must for a writing companion.

The popular-priced dictionary presents the following outstanding features:

- Broad vocabulary selection to meet the needs of the user in his daily reading and writing
- Special sections containing foreign words and phrases
- Weights and measures
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- Numerous clear illustrations
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All these great features for only \$4.95.

Random House American College Dictionary cuts short on your search time. Here is how:

- Has a complete thumb index
- Definitions are arranged with the most common American meaning first followed by older meanings
- 350 recognized authorities worked directly on this book
- Has over 1,500 illustrations
- It will be constantly revised so that it is always up-to-date

Comes in blue Bucksam binding, stamped in gold which would also make an attractive gift.

Suggested Retail: \$6.95

## **APPENDIX VI**

### **Coupons Used For Product Redemption**

## APPENDIX VI

This appendix contains samples of the coupons distributed to all experimental subjects in Phase I and II, after having exposed them to the experimental portfolios of ads. To avoid any possible order effect, half of the coupons were printed with Scripto being listed first and Paper Mate second, and the remainder of the coupons was printed in the reverse order.

COUPON  
40% OFF ON  
PAPER MATE OR SCRIPTO  
BALL POINT PENS  
NAME: .....  
COUPON REDEEMABLE AT SLU BOOK STORE ONLY  
OFFER LIMITED ONE PEN PER PERSON  
OFFER EXPIRES OCT. 25, 1977

COUPON  
40% OFF ON  
SCRIPTO OR PAPER MATE  
BALL POINT PENS  
NAME: .....  
COUPON REDEEMABLE AT SLU BOOK STORE ONLY  
OFFER LIMITED ONE PEN PER PERSON  
OFFER EXPIRES OCT. 25, 1977



## **APPENDIX VII**

### **The Research Instrument Used In Phase I Of The Study For The Prepurchase Attitude Measurement**

## APPENDIX VII

This appendix contains the research instrument used in gathering the necessary data on the prepurchase attitude after the comparative and conventional groups having been exposed to the portfolio of ads in Phase I of the study. The first questionnaire was used to poll the subjects opinions on the feasibility of Direct Marketing to College Students. The second questionnaire was designed to scale the attitudes (brand preference) of the subjects toward Scripto and Paper Mate pens on a 7-point scale. To eliminate any possible order effect, the values of the scale were reversed and the order of pens listed were changed as can be seen in the four copies of this instrument. Finally, the third questionnaire was used to tap the subjects' attitude toward the two dictionaries.

### Questions on Direct Marketing

The following questions pertain to our discussion of "Direct Marketing to College Students." For each question circle the number which best describes your opinion on the topic. The more you disagree with the statement, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you agree with the statement, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither agree nor disagree with the statement, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion counts.

#### STATEMENTS

- A. Direct marketing is a great idea for helping college students.

Disagree Strongly	Disagree	Disagree Slightly	Neutral	Agree Slightly	Agree	Agree Strongly
-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

- B. The implimentation of direct marketing to college students would be difficult.

Disagree Strongly			Neutral			Agree Strongly
-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

- C. Marketing specialists should be consulted for designing methods and procedures to be used in ordering school supplies from the companies.

Disagree Strongly			Neutral			Agree Strongly
-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

### Questions on Pens

Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For each brand circle the number which best indicates how much you dislike or like that brand. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither dislike nor like it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion counts.

#### BRANDS:

	Definitely Dislike	Dislike	Dislike Slightly	Neutral	Like Slightly	Like	Definitely Like
Paper Mate	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
	Definitely Dislike	Dislike	Dislike Slightly	Neutral	Like Slightly	Like	Definitely Like
Scripto	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

### Questions on Pens

Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For each brand circle the number which best indicates how much you like or dislike that brand. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. If you neither like nor dislike it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion counts.

#### BRANDS:

	Definitely Like	Like	Like Slightly	Neutral	Dislike Slightly	Dislike	Definitely Dislike
Scripto	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3
	Definitely Like	Like	Like Slightly	Neutral	Dislike Slightly	Dislike	Definitely Dislike
Paper Mate	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3

### Questions on Pens

Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For each brand circle the number which best indicates how much you like or dislike that brand. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. If you neither like nor dislike it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion counts.

#### BRANDS:

	Definitely Like	Like	Like Slightly	Neutral	Dislike Slightly	Dislike	Definitely Dislike
Paper Mate	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3
	Definitely Like	Like	Like Slightly	Neutral	Dislike Slightly	Dislike	Definitely Dislike
Scripto	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3

### Questions on Pens

Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For each brand circle the number which best indicates how much you dislike or like that brand. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither dislike nor like it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion counts.

#### BRANDS:

	Definitely Dislike	Dislike	Dislike Slightly	Neutral	Like Slightly	Like	Definitely Like
Scripto	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
	Definitely Dislike	Dislike	Dislike Slightly	Neutral	Like Slightly	Like	Definitely
Paper Mate	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

### Questions on Dictionaries

Listed below are two brands of dictionaries. For each brand circle the number which best indicates how much you dislike to like that brand. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither dislike nor like it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. There are no right or wrong answers. Only your opinion counts.

#### BRANDS:

	Definitely Dislike	Dislike	Dislike Slightly	Neutral	Like Slightly	Like	Definitely Like
Webster's New Ideal Dictionary	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Random House Amer- ican College Dict.	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3



## **APPENDIX VIII**

**The Research Instrument Used In Phase I**

**And II Of The Study For The Post-**

**Purchase Attitude Measurement**

## APPENDIX VIII

The research instrument in this appendix was administered to all experimental subjects in Phase I and II in order to scale their postpurchase attitude toward the pens redeemed with their coupons. Again, to avoid order effect, the listing of the pen brands and the values of the 7-point scale were reversed, as can be seen in the four copies of the questionnaire.

### Questions on Ball-Point Pen Purchased

Ten days ago you were given a coupon to redeem at the bookstore. What brand of ball-point pen did you purchase with the coupon? Please check the box that applies to your answer.

Scripto ☐

Paper Mate ☐

Neither ☐

Note:

You do not need to answer the following question if you checked the box for "Neither."

Now that you have had an opportunity to use the ball-point pen redeemed with the coupon, we would like to know what you think of it. Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For the brand you purchased circle the number which best indicates how much you presently dislike or like that brand. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither dislike nor like it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. Only your opinion counts.

Reminder: Answer only for the brand you purchased.

BRANDS:

	Definitely Like	Like	Like Slightly	Neutral	Dislike Slightly	Dislike	Definitely Dislike
Scripto	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3
Paper Mate	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3

### Questions on Ball-Point Pen Purchased

Ten days ago you were given a coupon to redeem at the bookstore. What brand of ball-point pen did you purchase with the coupon? Please check the box that applies to your answer.

Paper Mate ☐

Scripto ☐

Neither ☐

Note:

You do not need to answer the following question if you checked the box for "Neither."

Now that you have had an opportunity to use the ball-point pen redeemed with the coupon, we would like to know what you think of it. Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For the brand you purchased circle the number which best indicates how much you presently dislike or like that brand. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither dislike nor like it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. Only your opinion counts.

Reminder: Answer only for the brand you purchased.

BRANDS:

	Definitely Like	Like	Like Slightly	Neutral	Dislike Slightly	Dislike	Definitely Dislike
Paper Mate	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3
Scripto	+3	+2	+1	0	-1	-2	-3

### Questions on Ball-Point Pen Purchased

Ten days ago you were given a coupon to redeem at the bookstore. What brand of ball-point pen did you purchase with the coupon? Please check the box that applies to your answer.

Scripto ☐

Paper Mate ☐

Neither ☐

Note:

You do not need to answer the following question if you checked the box for "Neither."

Now that you have had an opportunity to use the ball-point pen redeemed with the coupon, we would like to know what you think of it. Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For the brand you purchased circle the number which best indicates how much you presently dislike or like that brand. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither dislike nor like it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. Only your opinion counts.

Reminder: Answer only for the brand you purchased.

BRANDS:

	Definitely Dislike	Dislike	Dislike Slightly	Neutral	Like Slightly	Like	Definitely Like
Scripto	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Paper Mate	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

Questions on Ball-Point Pen Purchased

Ten days ago you were given a coupon to redeem at the bookstore. What brand of ball-point pen did you purchase with the coupon? Please check the box that applies to your answer.

Paper Mate ☐      Scripto ☐      Neither ☐

Note:

You do not need to answer the following question if you checked the box for "Neither."

Now that you have had an opportunity to use the ball-point pen redeemed with the coupon, we would like to know what you think of it. Listed below are two brands of ball-point pen products. For the brand you purchased circle the number which best indicates how much you presently dislike or like that brand. The more you dislike it, the bigger the minus number you should give it. The more you like it, the bigger the plus number you should give it. If you neither dislike nor like it, circle "0" on the horizontal scale given below. Only your opinion counts.

Reminder: Answer only for the brand you purchased.

BRANDS:

	Definitely Dislike	Dislike	Dislike Slightly	Neutral	Like Slightly	Like	Definitely Like
Paper Mate	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Scripto	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3

## VITA

Zohrab S. Demirdjian was born on September 28, 1941, in Lebanon. He received his high school diploma from Aleppo College in May 1958. Between June 1958 and June 1966, he held managerial positions in business firms both in the U.S. and abroad. Also, he taught for three years at the U.S. Air Force base at Nouasseur.

In January 1967, he entered Arizona State University in Tempe, to study Business Administration. After graduating from Arizona State University in May, 1969, with a Bachelor of Science degree, he entered the graduate school at Arizona State University and was graduated with a Master of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in Marketing in May, 1971.

After working for awhile for Cincinnatti Shoe Company, he entered Louisiana State University in the fall of 1972 as a doctoral student majoring in Marketing while minoring in Psychology and Management. He is currently an Assistant Professor at Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, and a candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Marketing at Louisiana State University.

## EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Zohrab S. Demirdjian

Major Field: Marketing

Title of Thesis: Comparative vs. Conventional Advertising: A Study of the Differential Effects of Two Promotional Strategies on Attitude and Purchase

Approved:

Joe L. Hair Jr.  
Major Professor and Chairman  
James G. Traynham  
Dean of the Graduate School

### EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Fred K. Endrey  
Mary C. Harrison  
Sam Cannon  
Allen C. Buras

Date of Examination:

April 5, 1978